















# BIOGRAPHY

## VARIETIES AND PARALLELS

Edited by Dwight Durling, Queens College  
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TO  
M. T. D.  
and  
S. M. W.

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# *Biography*

VARIETIES AND PARALLELS

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## INTRODUCTION

### *The New Biography*

THE NEW BIOGRAPHY was hardly new, and some of it was not biography. But to any student of the literary movements of the ten years after the first World War the phrase is clear enough. For in that decade an Englishman, Lytton Strachey, a German, Emil Ludwig, a Frenchman, André Maurois, and—somewhat out of the main stream—an American, Gamaliel Bradford, led an international renaissance in biography. Bradford had published several volumes and Ludwig was working in the field before Strachey's first biographies appeared, but the brilliant, startling Englishman became the acknowledged master. In *Eminent Victorians* (1918) and *Queen Victoria* (1921) he lit the main highways which his followers have taken ever since.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, Lytton Strachey was a conscious literary artist. There had been literary artistry, to be sure, in biography before his time—in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, in Izaak Walton's *Lives*, in Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, for example. But most mid-nineteenth century biographers, in England and America at least, had forgotten this. In the classic preface to *Eminent Victorians* Strachey scoffed at "those two fat volumes" of the Life-and-Letters School "with their ill-digested masses of material, their slipshod style . . . their lamentable lack of selection, of detachment, of design." He saw that to tell all "by the direct method of a scrupulous narration" was impossible. "To preserve . . . a becoming brevity—a brevity which excludes everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant—that, surely, is the first duty of the biographer." Thus with merciless economy he compressed the crowded lives of Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, Thomas Arnold, and General Gordon into a single slender volume, and showed his contemporaries that the pedestrian process of biography could be a new, exciting art.

The best of Strachey's followers learned this lesson well. Although they could not write as brilliantly as he, they learned, like him, to "lower . . . a little bucket" instead of trying to swallow the "great ocean of material." They combed tedious documents for single phrases of significance and cast the rest aside. They telescoped the uneventful years in swift transitions. And the lumbering chronicles of the Vic-

torians were soon replaced by stream-lined narratives geared to an evening's reading.

But learning the lessons of brevity and proportion did not exhaust the possibilities of this new art. Exhilarated by their freedom as creative artists, the biographers instinctively moved nearer to the realms of fiction and the drama. At the same time, frustrated novelists and dramatists began to succumb to the attractions of biography. Conscientious critics began to ask questions. Could a biographer, so long as he did not violate the facts of the record, manipulate his material for dramatic effect, freely using the tricks of suspense and surprise, climax and anti-climax, like any novelist or playwright? Perhaps. Certainly the Victorian tradition of beginning with a pedigree, stopping at every milestone down the years—birth, youth, schooldays, college—and closing on a death-bed gasp and funeral elegy was unnecessarily confining. But could a biographer use dialogue as freely as a novelist? Perhaps not. For Boswell to take down Johnson's grumblings like a dictaphone with hardly a "Sir" misplaced was one thing; for a biographer half a century after Disraeli's death to supply dialogue for a given situation in his life, even if it was lifted from his letters, was another. After all, the doubtful critics reasoned, did Nelson really say, "England expects every man to do his duty" or, as Ford Madox Ford has conjectured, "The country confidently anticipates that in this vicissitude every man of the fleet will perform his functions with accuracy and courage"? Finally, could a biographer go a step farther and read his subject's mind, freely using the interior monologue or stream-of-consciousness made popular by novelists like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf? Here was the most questionable practice of all. Yet the new biographers did all these things. The Victorian biographer had usually been content with a chronological record of deeds; the new biographer not only manipulated deeds for dramatic effect but supplied an accompaniment of speech, motives, and audible thoughts as well. In short, he adopted the point of view of the omniscient story-teller, or what Bernard De Voto has scornfully called "the God's-eye view."

Of course, all the new biographers did not go the whole way. The leaders showed restraint. Strachey was a master of the interior monologue used gracefully and sparingly. Emil Ludwig, at his best, skillfully fitted his material into a frame-work like that of a well-made play. André Maurois invaded more dangerous ground. His first and best known "*biographie romancée*," *Ariel* (1923), was actually adapted from a novel which he had previously written about Shelley. His method was to work for artistic unity by seeking out the "well-hidden harmony," the "mysterious rhythm," of his subject's life. "In the

biography of Shelley . . .," he maintained, "there must be a theme of water; water plays a great part in Shelley's life. As a boy he is attracted by it; as a man he spends his life in fragile boats. From the beginning, you feel that he will die by drowning. The writer should give this impression of impending fate." Objections to this romantic reasoning are not hard to find. Why *must* there be a theme of water? Who feels it? The rational reader taking each event as it comes, unaware that the story ends in the Bay of Spezia? Or the romantic biographer bemused by a fascinating symbol of his own design? Obviously the "novelized biography," even in the hands of a master, is not without its dangers. Too many readers have turned away from *Ariel* convinced that they could now "see Shelley plain." But the worst evils lie not in the works of Maurois, nor in the similar attempts of other honest and skillful artists like Harold Nicolson, but rather in the clumsy "biografictions" of a host of second-rate practitioners. Maurois novelized on a groundwork of facts and called his *Ariel* "a Shelley Romance." They altered facts and freely manufactured fictions and called it Biography. If Maurois led biography to the brink of fiction, they pushed it in.

IN ADDITION to being an artist, Lytton Strachey was also a brilliant student of personality. *Queen Victoria* (1921) is not so much the chronicle of an age as a gallery of memorable portraits—the Queen, the Prince Consort, Disraeli, and Gladstone. The great biographies of the past had been real characterizations. The reader of Boswell's *Johnson* may forget the details of the Wilkes dinner; he does not forget Ursa Major or poor Noll Goldsmith. But the Victorian monument-makers were more interested in pointing out what a gentleman ought to be than in finding out what a man was. As a result, their Thomas Arnolds and their Gladstones were lessons on legs, not one of them a tenth as genuine as Wilkins Micawber, Esquire. Strachey and his contemporaries did not discover the element of personality in biography. But they rediscovered it and analyzed it with new scientific instruments.

The most important of these instruments was, of course, modern psychology. Psychology looms large, for example, in the theory and practice of Bradford and Ludwig. For Bradford, the new biography had one important aim: "the intimate study of the human heart." He ascribed this tendency to the spread of the "scientific spirit" throughout the nineteenth century, and he thought of his French master, Sainte-Beuve, as no less a scientist than Darwin himself. Bradford tabulated traits of personality with scientific zeal and gave his case

studies a name with the odor of the laboratory clinging to it—"Psychographs." In like manner, Ludwig insisted that the problem of biography is "the discovery of a human soul" and that the biographer is "first of all a psychologist . . . much nearer to the biologist than to the historian." When he wrote of the modern biographer's business of analyzing "the personality *per se*, the personality almost devoid of temporal coördinates, considering the volume, intensity, and resistance of its vital forces, the restless fluid of its emotional configurations, and the balance between its impulse towards action and its repression through precept," his doctrine sounded like a text-book in psychology. Of course, in many ways these pioneers could not be more unlike. Bradford's studies are generally unemotional and static, Ludwig's notable for calculated drama. Bradford worked in a restricted field for a limited public; Ludwig has ranged from a few solid studies for mature readers to superficial journalism for the millions.

There were few biographies in the twenties which did not reflect to some extent the application of new scientific and pseudo-scientific knowledge to the analysis of personality. Freudian studies were numberless. Van Wyck Brooks in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920) stirred up a hornets' nest of criticism by emphasizing the domination of his subject's wife and mother. Joseph Wood Krutch in *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study in Genius* (1926) analyzed the poet's flight from humiliating realities. Biographers did not stop at psychology. Poe's eye-strain, Carlyle's indigestion, and George Washington's bad teeth came in for reconsideration, and Queen Elizabeth was found to have suffered, at one time or another, not only from bad teeth, but also from stomach and liver trouble, anemia, probable rheumatism, probable kidney trouble, and possible "acute endocarditis and mitral regurgitation." Here too arose nice points for conscientious critics. What is, after all, the relative importance of clinical records in the study of personality? Is biography an art or a science or both? Must every characterization become a case study, every biographer a biologist? Such questions, of course, did not disturb the commercial penmen during the biography boom. They saw gold in the neat, new formula of reducing a man's whole destiny to one disease or tracing all of his complexities to a single magic complex. These Frankenstein-biographers broke into the laboratories and made monsters out of dead men's bones.

IN THE LITERAL SENSE of the word, Lytton Strachey was a debunker. The history of biography is the story of the struggle between myth-makers and debunkers. When Boswell, despite his prejudice and hero-

worship, made Johnson out to be a human being, myth-making suffered a momentous setback. But half a century later, when Lockhart pictured Scott as less heroic than his worshippers would have him, there were shouts of protest. Carlyle sneered cynically, "Your true hero must have no features, but be white, stainless, an impersonal ghost-hero!" But the myth-makers won the day. The typical Victorian biography was a devout act of commemoration, perpetrated by the minister of the deceased—or perhaps, as Harold Nicolson has put it, by "Cousin Effie down at Bournemouth who once wrote such a sweet little book upon Devon wild flowers"—and showing every possible consideration for the sensibilities of the sisters and the cousins and the aunts. When at the end of the century Froude undertook to question the domestic happiness of the Carlyles, he rocked the foundations of the literary world. By 1918 most of the Victorian myths still hovered in the atmosphere. Strachey announced in his preface to *Eminent Victorians* that he meant to maintain his "freedom of spirit," "to lay bare the facts . . . dispassionately, impartially, and without ulterior intentions." To do this with the Victorian legacy he had to be a debunker.

If debunking is the process of "divesting of bunk," it is indispensable to human progress. In replacing sentimental panegyric with honest evaluation, myths with truths, gods with men, the new biographers performed a noble service. In the America of the Teapot Dome scandal there was whitewash to remove and muck to rake. But the word "debunking" acquired another connotation. "Debunking" became indistinguishable from "detracting" or "belittling." Some reasons for this are clear. A few months after the appearance of *Eminent Victorians* the first World War was over. When *Queen Victoria* came out, the springs of idealism were almost dry. A world which felt that it had been misled into war by false gods was in no mood for penning panegyrics. In jazz-mad America the iconoclasm industry was soon running on double shifts. In the novel Sinclair Lewis was one of the idols of the idol-smashers; in criticism, H. L. Mencken; in biography—Lytton Strachey.

There can be little doubt that Strachey himself sometimes crossed the line from honest "debunkery" to malicious detraction. Few found fault with his decision to dispel the ghosts of "the Lady with the Lamp" and "the Widow of Windsor." Many, however, maintained that in the process of replacing them with a driving, hard-bitten crusader and a proud, stubborn little fat woman he forgot his vows about "ulterior intentions" and did some retouching of his own. At any rate, the sins of Strachey's followers were often far less venial.



He did a lot of honest idol-smashing in the temple of Baal; they wrought indiscriminate carnage. He insinuated the poison of irony subtly, surreptitiously; they splashed acid in the faces of their victims. He produced works of art; they tossed off tabloid journalism. Washington became a slave-driving Tory snob and nothing more, Lincoln a wife-hating teller of *risqué* stories, Grant a lucky drunkard. To say, as E. F. Benson has, that they replaced the Victorian standard of "*nil nisi bonum*" with "*nil nisi bunkum*" is, of course, inaccurate. A great many of their facts were true. But to informed readers who had never taken their Parson Weems too seriously few of these facts were new. Being details which matter little in the total estimate of character, they had long since been relegated to their proper importance in the picture, and there was no need for the scandal-mongers to make close-ups and enlargements. The average Victorian biography may have been a glorified portrait, carefully posed. The average American biography, for a time in the twenties, was more like one of those candid camera snaps—with the helpless subject lying supine, his body grotesquely foreshortened, and his feet in the foreground monstrously enlarged.

THE BIOGRAPHY BOOM which accompanied prosperity in America during the twenties reached its height at about the time of the stock market crash. Since that time, we have experienced, not a biography depression, but an era of more moderate prosperity. In the past ten years it has become increasingly clear that the "new" biography did not obliterate all traces of the "old." The growth of the artistic, selective biography by no means meant the doom of the exhaustive scholarly study which leaves no document unthumbed; the success of Maurois' *Ariel* did not dispel the need for Newman Ivey White's *Shelley* (1940). The development of "debunkery" and detraction did not do away with pompous panegyric; there are still professional biographers who, for a price, will glorify the most inglorious, and the second World War has meant the resurrection of discarded myths in other lands than Germany. If the conscious moral purpose is no longer dominant, the ulterior political motive is still common. Generally speaking, the decade of the thirties witnessed a decline in "biografiction," pseudo-psychanalysis, and cynical detraction. But the real lessons of the new biography—lessons in the artistic presentation of narrative, the psychological study of personality, and the removal of unnecessary haloes—have not been taught in vain. Permanent gains are apparent in distinguished works like Harold Nicolson's *Portrait of a Diplomatist* (1930), Philip Guedalla's *Wellington* (1931), Stefan Zweig's *Marie*

*Antoinette* (1933), Douglas Southall Freeman's four-volume *Lee* (1934), Carl Sandburg's six-volume *Lincoln* (1926-39), and Carl Van Doren's *Franklin* (1938)—works which have demonstrated, among other things, that scholarly biography need not be inartistic, nor artistic biography unscholarly. There is reason to believe that the new biography has perhaps survived its brilliant but erratic youth and come of age at last.

#### AUTOBIOGRAPHY

TO ESTABLISH critical standards for biography is difficult enough. To do it for autobiography is virtually impossible. It is easy, for example, to make generalizations about the history of biography in nineteenth century England, but what can be said about autobiography in a century which saw Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817), De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34), John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* (1873), and Anthony Trollope's *Autobiography* (1883)?

Perhaps a few generalizations about modern autobiography are reasonably safe. Generally speaking, there has been a new era in autobiography just as in biography. The beginning is usually put in 1907, the year of Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*. Here was a frank protest against Victorian conventions, a penetrating analysis of conflicting temperaments in different generations, and a perfectly proportioned work of art. On the whole, more recent autobiographers have tended towards the same techniques used by biographers. One notable difference is that the spread of the "short biography" has not, for fairly obvious reasons, been accompanied by a corresponding movement in "short autobiography." Some autobiographers, like William Ellery Leonard in *The Locomotive-God* (1927), have examined their symptoms in the scientific manner of the psychoanalyst; others, like James Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), have presented them with conscious artistry and thinly coated them with fiction. If debunking is not a logical approach for autobiography, there have at least been many who, like H. G. Wells in *Experiment in Autobiography* (1934), have written so revealingly about themselves that they have certainly stolen thunder from debunkers of the future.

There has been a noticeable tendency for autobiographies, in America, at least, to appear in cycles according to their subject-matter. In the teens and twenties, for example, there were many chronicles by immigrants who had made good in the new world, among them Mary Antin's *Promised Land* (1912), John Muir's *Story of my Boyhood and Youth* (1913), Jacob Riis's *Making of an American* (1920), *The*

*Americanization of Edward Bok* (1921), Michael Pupin's *From Immigrant to Inventor* (1923), and Ludwig Lewisohn's *Up Stream* (1924). In the thirties the doctors came into their own, and inferior imitations of Victor Heiser's *American Doctor's Odyssey* (1936) and A. E. Hertzler's *Horse and Buggy Doctor* (1938) flooded the bookstalls. Today the foreign correspondents have the upper hand. Vincent Sheean's *Personal History* (1935), Walter Duranty's *I Write as I Please* (1935), Negley Farson's *Way of the Transgressor* (1935), and John Gunther's *Inside Europe* (1936) have been followed only recently by William L. Shirer's *Berlin Diary* (1941). For the present the best-selling autobiographical writing is not the sentimental reminiscence of a bygone era, but a brisk analysis of today's news.

### THE SHORT BIOGRAPHY

BIOGRAPHY BEGAN with the short biography. The full-length, detailed study is a later development. The Bible includes early examples of short "lives," and Plutarch (A.D. 46?-120?) wrote "parallel lives" of the Greeks and Romans which are still models of excellence. From the times of Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, and Suetonius to those of Samuel Johnson, the short biography reigned supreme. The medieval "saints' lives" such as those in the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine are far from the sphere of history, but they belong to the story of the development of a biographical *genre*. Giorgio Vasari's lives of the painters of the Italian Renaissance, John Aubrey's and Izaak Walton's seventeenth-century sketches of the English worthies of the age, and Doctor Johnson's lives of the English poets are collections of short biographies and are important landmarks in the development of a literary type. Since the eighteenth century the type has spread and developed further; before our own day it was practiced by such masters of portraiture and criticism as, to name but a few, Carlyle, Macaulay, Thackeray, Michelet, Brunetière, and, above all, Sainte-Beuve, the best of whose *Monday Chats* (*Causeries du Lundi*, 1849-1861) represent perhaps the highest reach yet attained by the short biography combined with literary criticism.

In our own time the causes which have led to the unprecedented wide cultivation of the whole field of biography have immensely influenced this form. Almost all the tendencies which have shaped the whole recent trend may be seen and studied in shorter compass in the short biography. A great many of the writers of full-length biographies have also written in this form, applying in it the same principles and much the same methods: Lytton Strachey, Philip Guedalla, Virginia Woolf, André Maurois, Stefan Zweig, Emil Ludwig,

Gamaliel Bradford, Roy F. Dibble, Phillips Russell, George Slocombe, Rollo Walter Brown, and many others, both major and minor. Many have used it as a vehicle for their explorations in special fields of interest: Paul De Kruif and Bernard Jaffe in science, George Slocombe in modern art, Bonamy Dobrée in literary history, Matthew Josephson and John T. Flynn in economic history, Arthur Bryant, an Englishman, in American political ideals. Van Wyck Brooks has fitted the form into the fascinating panoramas of his New England series in intellectual history. Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927-30) includes a great many sketches which might be called biographies of influential minds, studies of their development and intellectual vicissitudes. The bibliography at the end of this volume will suggest many other special uses of the form in our time. It should be remembered, of course, that the term "short biography" is a wholly relative one, having no more exact denotations of length and scope than, say, the term "short story."

The new tendency to brevity, selection, and suggestion in the field of biography might seem to lead almost inevitably back towards the short biography, out of which the *genre* had developed, and towards some of the qualities exemplified by Plutarch, Vasari, Walton, and Sainte-Beuve. The new tendency did encourage the writing of sketches which purported to be—and in the best examples were—distillations of characterization and interpretation based upon adequate knowledge but shorn of heavy documentation—the weighty panoply of letters, detailed footnotes and citations of sources, quotations of works and family records, etc., etc., which cumbered the Victorian biography. Writers good, bad, and indifferent staked out their claims in what seemed to some almost a newly discovered territory—less restricted than the crowded provinces of fiction. Magazine publishers were quick to see the new popularity of biography, first apparent in the book market. Magazines, reviews, Sunday newspaper supplements, opened hospitable pages to new biographical writers and, along with much hasty, shoddy work, published a good deal of really original writing. The magazine market imposed its own limitations of length and undoubtedly provides one explanation for the sudden recent growth of short biography. But the best examples of the type are not made to order or cut to pattern; their form is organic, the outgrowth of a sincere effort to arrive at essentials and to suggest them with a vivid brevity. Readers of recent American magazines, for example, will remember interesting short biographies, representing many shades of purpose, from the "Atlantic Portraits" of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the

"Profiles" of the *New Yorker*, the sketches by Stephen Vincent and Rosemary Benét in the New York *Herald-Tribune* supplement *Books*, as well as many isolated sketches in such magazines as the *Yale Review*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *Fortune*, *Forum*, and *Life*. But it is easily possible to exaggerate the relation of magazine publication and the short biography. Many of the best examples of the type have not appeared in magazines at all.

Many motives prompt writers of the short biography. Those which once produced a flourishing popular literature of the "success story" are apparently extinct at the moment; the type, unlamented, seems to have come to an abrupt end, along with much that produced it, somewhere about the year 1929. Moral and religious motivations, the didactic ones that produce modern equivalents of medieval hagiography seem to be moribund, though not completely inactive. The eulogists, the biographers of the "tombstone and obituary school" still survive, though in depleted numbers. The *chronique scandaleuse*, hagiography in reverse, we shall probably always have with us. Frank attack and "debunking," which for a time flourished like the green bay tree, are persistent motives with certain writers, but moderation and detachment have on the whole increased. Psycho-analytical probing, local and sectarian partisanship, curiosity about current celebrities, criticism of social tendencies, all produce their characteristic biographical literature. Disinterested scholarly inquiry still goes on in its great task of making the past intelligible and useful to the present and the future. The truth-seeking and the creative energies of the artist impel him to make the past live again in meaningful patterns. In a given biographical writer motivations may be mixed, anything but simple. In the welter of often conflicting intentions and purposes, the reader is left to choose for himself, to winnow the good from the bad; and his choices will reveal the motives which guide him in reading the lives of men.

In matters of form, fortunately, the short biography has never settled into fixed patterns. It has had no authoritarians and "law-givers" like those who long did their level best to reduce the short story to lathe-work. In the potentially unlimited varieties of treatment in the short biography lie great possibilities for experiment and development. The writer may reveal the form implicit in his facts and his interpretation of them, without imposing a ready-made form upon them. And he is free to borrow suggestions from his knowledge of centuries of experiment in narrative, dramatic, descriptive, and expository forms.

## Plan of This Book

THIS BOOK has been planned with two main purposes in view: (1) to present lives and character-sketches of figures of the present or of the not-too-distant past who represent typical ways of life, typical impulses that rule lives—representative men and women who, though they have the symbolic value of types, are also vivid individuals; and (2) to illustrate the potentialities of short biography by presenting characteristic variations on the biographical theme in a rich variety of patterns. These patterns reveal differing motives and ends which may legitimately be served, subject always to the higher end of truth. The book makes possible not only a view of types, methods, and experiments in contemporary biography and an acquaintance with leading practitioners of the art, but also an examination of representative men and ways of life by the Plutarchian method of comparison and contrast.

It may be worth while to suggest briefly why particular personalities and particular variations of biographical type are included. The characters are "representative" men, in Emerson's sense of the word. They represent not only individual variations that differentiate men but common traits that unite them. They may be studied as vivid embodiments of one or another of these *motifs*: the will to power or privilege in dominant rule, the impulse to public service and political idealism, the compulsion to social reform, the devotion to scientific investigation of external nature, the creative compulsion to expression of the world of human nature, the will to power through acquisitiveness, the complex motivations of wifehood, the complementary strivings and searchings of teacher and student, the tragic frustrations of the victim of oppressive power. (1) George III, the would-be absolutist, George IV, the royal dilettante, Hitler and Napoleon III, *parvenus* who rose to power along parallel paths, were driven forward by similar impulses. (2) Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson accepted unquestioningly the theory of the public servant in democratic government. Wilson is the democratic idealist facing a cruel conflict of the ideal and the actual. (3) Florence Nightingale is the crusader for reform who succeeds by executive genius and a calculating mastery of circumstances; John Brown is the fanatical man of feeling who succeeds by extremes and violence and finds his logical fulfillment in martyrdom. (4) Edison is the non-academic, even anti-academic, man of applied science, the

"wizard" of invention. Miss Ormerod is the investigative scientist absorbed in study and classification of natural forms, though willing to apply her results. The Curies are tireless laboratory explorers of the unknown whose heroic devotion is an epic of the scientific spirit. (5) The artists reveal another spirit, the creative, using men for its own ends and producing strange effects in their lives. Maurois's "Werther" is a pre-natal biography of a work of art, tracing Goethe's *catharsis* of personal experience in the processes of artistic creation. Whitman represents the artist as a spokesman of democratic aspirations, one of Shelley's "unacknowledged legislators of the world." Gauguin and Wagner, whose fidelity to art overcame conventional loyalties, illustrate the paradox of greatness and seeming personal pettiness or failure. (6) The acquisitive impulses which both create and destroy social and economic values, work themselves out in the careers of James J. Hill, Frederick Taylor, and the elder Morgan. (7) The rôle of the helpmeet to greatness, not very different from the rôle of other wives, is seen in Dolly Madison and Catherine Gladstone. (8) Thomas Mann and "Elsa Strauss" are victims of the totalitarianism recently loosed in the world, but they symbolize the endless enmity of culture and barbarism and the cruelties of oppressive power in all times. (9) Copeland and the teachers Canby describes represent perennial types of academic life; and (10) Sheean and Thurber represent the apprentice to life, the student, confused but sometimes awakening to a realization of fundamental issues.

The second purpose of this book, as said above, is "to illustrate the potentialities of short biography by presenting characteristic variations on the biographical theme in a rich variety of patterns. These patterns reveal differing motives and ends which may legitimately be served, subject always to the higher end of truth." Some of the following sketches are fairly full "lives," covering significant events of lifetimes; others concentrate on a short span of years; still others are character-sketches, little concerned with events as such, distilling the essence of personality in short compass. Most of them use a combination of narrative, descriptive, dramatic, and expository methods, the relative emphasis differing from sketch to sketch.

All stories— anecdotes, fiction, epic, biography, or autobiography— have basic elements in common: something happens (action) to someone (character) in place and time (setting), perhaps illustrating some comment or criticism of life (thesis). Every *raconteur* and every writer of tales tends to be interested most in one or another of these elements. In the short story and in the short biography limitations of space tend to intensify this preoccupation with one, or at most two, of these

elements. We speak of "action stories," "character stories," "local-color stories," "thesis stories," conscious of the predominance of strains in authors' purposes and patterns. Sometimes a short biography like Lytton Strachey's "Florence Nightingale" preserves a certain balance of elements, though even here "thesis" is the determining factor. The relative emphasis on various elements is a key to a biographer's intention and an important determinant of his form.

Nineteenth-century biographers usually tended to the method of chronicle, summary of events without much effort to give them dramatic realization, and to exposition of character in the abstract. "Setting" had its place in the "Life and Times" and was at least dimly suggested in any biography. Virtues of form and style were on the whole considered unnecessary luxuries, incompatible with sound historical scholarship. "Thesis," interpretation and evaluation, often tended to uncritical eulogy. Recent biography has borrowed many of the methods of the novelist, short-story writer, and dramatist in its treatment of the elements of its tale. In turning to a technique of exposition, it has impinged on the provinces of familiar essay, formal essay, criticism, or historical analysis.

The sketches in this book illustrate the great variety of method and form prevailing in our time. At one extreme, the Maurois sketch represents the "*biographie romancée*," a "fictionized" form, with plotted action; re-creation of character, setting, event, dialogue, and even reverie; and the evocative style of the good novelist or short-story writer. Virginia Woolf's "Miss Ormerod" is an impressionistic re-creation of a few significant episodes in a life, revealing the subtle hand trained in methods of innuendo and suggestion her fiction perfected. Maurois and Mrs. Woolf here represent a kind of "exit-author" narrative technique. Strachey and Guedalla, however, keep up a running fire of brilliant and witty personal comment. Lytton Strachey's sketch is a symmetrical narrative with interwoven commentary on character; it is selective, interpretive, and sometimes re-creative in its method, a finished work which shares with good fiction and drama many of their best qualities. Philip Guedalla's sketches combine biography and historical background, animated by the dramatic sense and the graphic style of the creative artist. M. A. Rosanoff and Erika and Klaus Mann ground their characterizations in intimate personal recollection concretely presented, the method on which Boswell mainly relied. Sir Norman Angell uses a composite of biographical facts from various lives, representing the fate of many refugees in one symbolic story, continually employing a form of "fictionized" narrative. George Slocombe and Bernard Jaffe rely on simple chronicle in the main,



telling stories full of inherent dramatic conflict and permitting the reader to supply most of the commentary. Stefan Zweig writes a "historical miniature," from which emerges a clear characterization of the central actor; but events rather than characterization are his main concern. Roy Dibble and William Bolitho are also chroniclers, summarizing the chief events in the lives of their characters, with some attention to historical backgrounds, and with more or less clearly implied evaluations. Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant summarizes a character and a career, with occasional more graphic glimpses of her subject in action. Vincent Sheean and James Thurber use the autobiographical narrative, with directly presented scenes; Sheean writes a serious confession of early intellectual awakenings and Thurber laughs at his own ineptitudes and those of others. John Dos Passos's sketches are a kind of prose-poetry, a condensation of essential narrative supporting an interpretation and carrying overtones of satire. These writers use variations of narrative method and varying degrees of description and dramatization. Exposition too is found in most of them, though as a subordinate means. But certain other authors use a primarily expository method and are related more or less closely to the informal essayist, the serious essayist, the critic, or the journalistic analyst. Instead of giving over the stage to their actors, they advance to the footlights themselves, expounding lives and characters, weighing, applauding, condemning. Gamaliel Bradford's "psychographs," as he insisted on calling them, are analyses developed by applying certain revealing "touchstones" of character. Sir Max Beerbohm writes a character sketch, frankly partisan, in the loose form of the familiar essay. We are as much interested in "Beau Beerbohm" as in the royal beau he examines with such urbane indulgence. Stuart Sherman's "Walt Whitman" is characterization plus literary criticism, a scholarly "portrait of a mind." John Gunther uses a journalist's approximation of the Bradford method, relying more entirely on pure exposition and influenced always by the "news" scale of values. Phillips Russell and Rollo Walter Brown analyze the intellectual positions or achievements of their subjects. Both writers subordinate events and even general characterization to commentary on ideas. Autobiographical reminiscence, in Henry Seidel Canby, approaches the expository evaluations of the social critic. And, finally, Deems Taylor writes a *précis* of character, a brief summation of the case for and against Richard Wagner, a charge to the jury called "posterity."

Many other criteria of classification than those arbitrarily used here might be employed in discussing the sketches that follow. But preceding paragraphs will at least suggest the variety of purpose, plan,

and method that gives vitality to the contemporary biography and character-sketch. The reader can trace for himself in more detail the relationships of purpose and pattern in the sketches themselves.

Perhaps this collection may serve one further purpose—that of suggesting new directions and fresh experiments in a field that offers great possibilities to writers who are historians enough to understand the past and artists enough to give it form and fresh significance.

# The Stepfather of the United States

## Portrait of H. M. King George III

PHILIP GUEDALLA (1889- )

One of the major biographers of our time and one of its most gifted historians, Philip Guedalla was educated at Rugby and at Balliol College, Oxford. In 1911 he served as president of the Oxford Union, the debating society which has nurtured the talents of so many eminent British statesmen and men of letters. While still an undergraduate, he published in the same year, 1911, *Ignes Fatui*, a book of parodies, and *Metri Gratia*, a collection of both verse and prose. His honors at graduation included a First in Modern History. After this brilliant university career, Guedalla turned to the law, became a barrister in 1913, and practised law until 1923, when he retired to devote himself to literature and politics. During the first World War he served as legal advisor to the War Office and the Ministry of Munitions. A member of the Liberal Party, he has stood as a candidate for Parliament from several constituencies.

Guedalla's continued absorption in modern history, in which he won distinction at Oxford, has borne fruit in a splendid series of works in that field and in biography since 1914. Not one of these works, not a page he has written, is afflicted with the dreaded occupational disease he has called "Historians' English." This plague, he adds,

is probably scheduled in the Workmen's Compensation Act, and the publisher may be required upon notice of the attack to make a suitable payment to the writer's dependents. The workers in this dangerous trade are required to adopt . . . a detached standpoint—that is, to write as if they took no interest in the subject. Since it is not considered good form for a graduate of less than sixty years' standing to write upon any period that is either familiar or interesting, the feeling is easily acquired, and the resulting narrations present the dreary impartiality of the Recording Angel without that completeness which is the sole virtue of his style.

*The Partition of Europe, 1715-1815* (1914), written in intervals stolen from legal studies and practice, began Guedalla's career as a writer of brilliant and vivacious historical prose. *Supers and Supermen* (1920), a lively volume of shorter sketches, too short to be more than approximations of biography, was his first approach towards the field in which he has done his best-known work. *The Second Empire* (1922), a large historical panorama of Europe in the era of Louis Napoleon, preceded other studies primarily in the field of history: *The Hundred Days* (1934), *The Hundred Years* (1936), and *The Hundredth Year* (1940).

When he turns to biography, Guedalla is always vastly interested in historical backgrounds—even in the bric-a-brac, the costumes, the mere furniture of a period; he never neglects the social scene in his interest in the leading actors. He is stage designer and scenic artist as well as dramatist. *Masters and Men* (1923), *A Gallery* (1927), *Independence Day* (1926)—published in America as *Fathers of the Revolution*, and *Bonnet and Shawl: An Album* (1928) are a fascinating series of shorter portraits and biographical sketches. "In the swift movement of a lightly pencilled sketch" George III, Washington, La Fayette, Franklin (*Independence Day*), Emily Palmerston, Mary Ann Disraeli (*Bonnet and Shawl*), or one of many others is caught indelibly. *Bonnet and Shawl*, even more "lightly pencilled" than *Independence Day*, brings to life not only some of the charming wives of the Victorian great but also the fragrance and grace of the feminine world they adorned. Guedalla's longer biographies are *Palmerston* (1926), a product of prodigious research and minute knowledge, *Gladstone and Palmerston* (1928), *The Duke* (1931)—published in America as *Wellington*, and *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone* (1923). *Wellington*, in America at least, has been the most widely read of Guedalla's longer works. In it the "iron duke" who took the measure of Napoleon moves through the ascending arc of his military and political career, the imperturbable, clear-eyed, confident master of his world, playing out his amazing rôle in a cast of characters which includes Nelson, Pitt, Talleyrand, Metternich, Castlereagh, the painter Lawrence, Byron, Beau Brummell, Mme. de Staël, and a throng of others. The American travel-sketches, *Rag-Time* (1927) and *Argentine Tango* (1931), show more than usual understanding of American modes and things, and may have done something to correct fantastic English and Continental conceptions created from crime reports and stock quotations. The titles cited above include only the principal writings of Guedalla; he has published essays also, magazine articles, and lectures such as *The Jewish Past* (1939), a presidential lecture before the Jewish Historical Society of England.

Of the professional historian and biographer Guedalla once said,

He is . . . one cell in the world's memory of itself; he, too, like the lamented Proust rides off *à la recherche du temps perdu* . . . He must reconstruct the past, set old breezes stirring once again, and—most elusive miracle of all—bring the dead back to life. His business is to write about dead men; but if he is to do his duty, he should remember that they were not always dead. For he is not concerned to embalm them, but to resurrect, to set them moving, catch the tone of their voices, tilt of their heads, and posture of the once living men . . . The past should, for the historian, be his present.

These lines reveal Guedalla's main intention as a writer—re-creation. He is first of all the artist, intent to evoke the vanished past, to make it live again in the theatre of the imagination. Social criticism and commentary and the effort to explain the present in terms of the past, functions of much historical and biographical writing, are subordinated to artistic re-creation.

Guedalla's style is a triumph of disciplined skill. In certain qualities it suggests Gibbon and Macaulay; but it is a distinct creation. It moves with a measured rhythmic grace; it glitters with wit, epigram, satire, and imagery. There is much play of balance, antithesis, and rhetorical artifice, much of the formal grace of a day when both prose and verse sought a polish of phrase and rhythm in keeping with aristocratic standards of art and life. Guedalla has a horror of *clichés*. Even puns are to be preferred: the German-Turk alliance means "*Deutschland über Allah*"; a German treaty is "a scrap of Papen"; "any stigma," he insists, "is good enough to beat a dogma with." Some readers feel that Guedalla tries too hard to avoid the taint of the commonplace, and have sighed for the sedate and restful pages of the *D.N.B.*; but Guedalla's style will be a delight to those who prefer prose polished and pointed. He does not often probe psychological depths. He tends to become absorbed in what the eye can see and what his graphic pen can suggest so vividly. Broad historical vistas, the whole social geography and climate of a period, he can evoke with consummate skill. His works teem with life and movement, with the crowded events and the pageantry of captains and kings of other days. And often the "Comic Spirit" of George Meredith's famous essay lurks overhead, alert to cast the "oblique light" on follies, foibles, and ironies—a light "followed by volleys of silvery laughter."

IT WAS A COLD FEBRUARY NIGHT IN 1820; and from the black meadows by Eton they could see lights moving in the Castle. From the park, where the trumpeters stood in the darkness, the dismal note of horns rose on the night mist; and the Yeomen of the Guard, all in black, loomed "like black giants" through the half light of a room all hung with black. In a room beyond, the King of England lay dead; and anxious heralds were forming up a long procession of solemn gentlemen by candle-light. The King was dead; and in the darkness at Windsor they were burying the poor mad old man who, for nearly twenty years, had been King Lear without Goneril, without Regan, without Cordelia. The long round of imaginary ceremonials, of unreal reviews passed with royal dignity, of illusory Parliaments opened with royal affability, was over at last; and this strange replica of one of Blake's long-bearded allegories was still. The conqueror, the captor of Napoleon; the father of the Arts and Sciences; the royal person of whom the most sonorous of his subjects observed, after a conversation in the library at the Queen's House in St. James's Park, "Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen"; the master of Lord Chatham, of Lord North, of Mr. Pitt; the pupil of Lord Bute; the sovereign of

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Garrick and Siddons and Sir Joshua and Mr. Wesley and Mr. Burke; all this and more lay in the silent room beyond the tall Yeomen in their black. For on that winter night in 1820 they were burying the Eighteenth Century.

## I

It all seemed so far away. The sun shone in St. James's and Sir Robert Walpole was minister, when the Prince was born in a great house at the corner of the Square. Gin was the leading recreation and Captain Macheath the favourite character of the people of England; the sad, tinkling melodies of Miss Lockett and Miss Peachum were barely five years old, and the Italian singers had driven Handel into bankruptcy. Young Mr. Walpole was making the most of the Grand Tour, "very glad that I see Rome while it yet exists"; and little Mr. Pope was exasperating his contemporaries, whilst the outraged delicacy of Mr. Hogarth retorted in emphatic caricature. At Norfolk House the Princess of Wales lay beside a rather puny infant in the morning light. Anxious ladies scurried about the house; and her Frederick, unconscious of the impending tennis-ball, looked on with large, indifferent eyes. Someone rode off to the King with the news; and outside in the Square the tiny lake gleamed in the June sunshine of 1738.

With a kind provision for its soul's welfare and a sad feeling of its approaching end, they baptised the little creature before night. But it survived them all, survived the century, even survived itself. That hurried morning and that sudden baptism were the strange opening of George's eighty years. A bishop called the next day and gave him a string of royal names; the Poet Laureate, visited by his punctual Muse, improved the occasion in a smooth copy of heroic couplets, which contained a happy, though hardly an unexpected, allusion to Ascanius; and the infant in St. James's Square was fairly launched upon his long career of royalty.

The surroundings, it must be confessed, were not inspiring. A house in a London square without even a sentry at the door may be an apt school of simplicity. But for the other graces there was a sad dearth of instructors. The happy father, absorbed in the rather clumsy frolics to which the House of Hanover is lamentably apt in its deviations from propriety, was a rare visitor in the nursery; although he once took the child to a concert at the Foundling Hospital. Yet this dismal figure, whose heavy eyes stare aimlessly out of history, was strangely popular. Nothing endears their rulers to the people of England so much as the extremes of raffishness and respectability; and Frederick's claims upon the former count were singularly high. Alike by the scale of his debts

and the range of his affections he stormed the popular heart. But possibly his absence from his son may be counted for a gain to George, since Frederick was unlikely to form the young mind; although he once composed an ode in French, and cherished an obscure ambition to become Chancellor of Cambridge University on the strength, perhaps, of a silver cup which he had offered to be rowed for in a boat race. But before the boy had turned thirteen, his father was removed. A fickle nation observed without discomposure that it was "only Fred"; and graduates of either University pursued him to the sky with dirges in all the learned languages. His royal grandfather was little beyond a distant vision of an alarming old gentleman with staring eyes and a large wig, who interrupted the child with boisterous noises at an investiture of the Garter and quite frightened out of his head the little speech which he had got by heart. Nothing remained for George to lean on but his mother. She was a patient lady, who had endured without complaint her introduction into a family which exhibited most of the filial imperfections of the Atreidae without their more pleasing features; and there was that "quiet sense" which she had brought with her from Saxe-Gotha to St. James's Square.

Two Earls, two bishops, and two gentlemen of mathematical attainments were enlisted to perfect the young intelligence, but with uneven success. The bishops did their work *à merveille* and produced a sound young Churchman. The Earls imparted whatever of peculiar attainment is in Earls. But the two scholars were a lamentable failure; and in his education George hardly reached the modest standard of a squire's son at a country grammar-school. His ignorance even became noticeable to himself in later years; and his tastes, in an age of taste, were non-existent. To this meagre curriculum his mother made two contributions, a distaste for society and the third Earl of Bute. Perhaps the first was almost natural in her. The poor lady had small cause to love the world; and she taught her son to avoid the bright and crowded assemblies, where he might, perhaps, have learnt by candle-light many lessons upon the management of men. So he remained always queer and a little lonely.

But Lord Bute was a more considerable ingredient in George's education. This accomplished person drifts into English history in a shower of rain, which stopped a cricket match near Richmond and drove the Prince's father to the dismal expedient of whist in a tent. Bute made a fourth at the card-table. His manners pleased; he called at Kew; and when he came to Court, he was attached to Frederick's Household. The Fates propelled the dreadful tennis-ball; and his master died, as he had lived, with bad French on his lips. But Bute remained beside the

widow; and when her son was training to be King of England, she turned often to the graceful Scotchman. He was a man of taste; he had a leg, collected drawings, and patronised the Society of Scottish Antiquaries. His proximity to the bereaved Princess invited scandal; but he had the sense to face it. He was no fool, but merely (both by race and by conviction) a Tory. Slow to convince, the Scotch are still slower to abandon a conviction which they have once reached by the painful processes of logic; and having absorbed with difficulty the royal doctrines of the Seventeenth Century, they still adhered to the creed in 1745. Perhaps the Prince's training owed a tinge of absolutism to Bute's direction. The comforting logic with which Jacobite writers excused the errors of the Stuarts could be adapted without undue strain to the House of Hanover; and it is not surprising that a startled bishop once came upon the boy reading a Jesuit's vindication of King James II. Such studies were unlikely to incline him to resign the throne in favour of Charles Edward (since even Princes are human); but they might prove a useful repertory of ideas, should he incline to revive the glories of the royal Prerogative. This tendency owed something also to his mother's guidance. Reared in a German Court where royalty had its due weight, she was pardonably shocked by the British system which confined the Lord's anointed to making stiff bows at a *Levée*, whilst the nation was administered by unconsecrated Whigs. This feeling, with a mother's pride, insisted that her son should "be a King"; and there can be small doubt that Bute showed the way. What else he taught the Prince is tolerably obscure. A tepid interest in medals, which Mr. Walpole once urged Sir Horace Mann to buy for him in Tuscany, and a total ignorance of law (imbibed from early study of Chief Justice Blackstone's *Commentaries* in manuscript) appear to be the only traces.

So the boy grew up; whilst the young men hunted Sir Robert Walpole out of office, and Mr. Pitt propelled his cheering countrymen through the great round of victories. He was a trifle solitary, "shut up in a room," playing at Comet (but for diminutive stakes) with the family, or living among his mother's plants at Kew. These mild pursuits exasperated his virile grandfather. The hero of Dettingen learned with disgust of a royal visit to a tapestry factory. "Damn," he exclaimed, "dat tapestry—I shall have de Princes made women of." A repetition of the offence evoked reprisals: he had "oder dings to show dem dan needles and dreads," and promptly took off a small Princess to a military review in Hyde Park. He was irked by the rather Methodist virtues of his heir, who seemed "good for nothing but to read the Bible to his mother." But when he proposed to the Prince of Wales a marriage of the usual pattern with a princess from Brunswick, the mild young man



refused; and Mr. Walpole was in transports over his reluctance to be "*bewolfenbuttled*," a word which I do not pretend to understand, as it is not in Mr. Johnson's new *Dictionary*." George's prejudice was personal rather than patriotic; since it appeared that he had no objection to the daughter of a German prince, upon whose territory "some frow," as Mr. Walpole said, "may have emptied her pail and drowned his dominions." For he boldly made application for the portrait of a rival beauty, who resided in the more favoured region of Saxe-Gotha. Perhaps his mother, who valued her own position as "the Lady Dowager Prudence," discouraged the Brunswick match. Perhaps (who knows?) he had a will of his own. No one could say, since the world knew little of him. And how little he knew of the world! His travels, in the age of the Grand Tour, took him no further than Cheltenham, with one wild excursion (in delicious *incognito*) to the south of Scotland. His studies kindled little beyond a mild taste for agriculture; though he betrayed that faint inclination towards mechanics which often haunts those whose livelihood is not dependent upon their skill. He once designed a watch of tiny proportions, "rather less than a silver twopence"; but the execution was wisely left in other hands, his own mechanical achievements being almost entirely confined to turning upon a lathe, with which he was positively believed to have made a button. As a little boy he had walked through the town at night with his father

To look at garters black and white  
On legs of female rabble.

But in spite of this initiation he never figured in the raffish world, where it was the lofty ambition of young gentlemen

To run a horse, to make a match  
To revel deep, to roar a catch;  
To knock a tottering watchman down,  
To sweat a woman of the town.

Indeed, he was scarcely seen in those more elegant quarters where Mr. Selwyn paraded his wit and the hackney-chairs lined up outside assemblies. One catches a glimpse of him at Miss Chudleigh's party for his birthday, when she opened the dance with the Duke of York and the court was illuminated with "a battlement of lamps." There were "pyramids and troughs of strawberries and cherries" for supper, which covered all the sideboards and even filled the chairs, although the party from the Spanish Embassy supped off fish for their conscience' sake; and the gamblers played upstairs in a long room full of bookcases, "with the finest Indian pictures on different colours and with Chinese chairs

of the same colours." But he was a rare visitor; and the world knew little of him.

Yet there was so little to know. If not to be a bad man is to be a good man, George was a good man. Indeed, the private virtues consist so largely of abstinence that, on the private side, his negative equipment suffices to render him quite blameless. He was a dutiful son, a faithful husband, and a devoted parent, "revered," in the pleasant terms applied to another squire, "by his family, honoured by his tenants, and awful to his domestics." But such innocuous epitaphs rarely suffice for kings. Public figures are judged by more exacting tests; and in the sphere of politics George owed his failure (for he failed) to those more positive qualities which he did not possess.

## II

At twenty-two, this paragon of somewhat negative virtues became King of England. The season, in 1760, was singularly apt for his accession; and his subjects seemed to demand of him precisely what the mild young man could offer. Two revolutions and two elderly German kings had developed a new convention of the Constitution. The sovereign was no longer required to govern England. That anxious business had been transferred to a committee of his subjects, partly because, unlike the last two monarchs, they understood the English language, and partly because they were the political heirs of the men who had deposed James II and decapitated Charles I. This readjustment of responsibilities, which found a succession to the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell in the virtual Premiership of Sir Robert Walpole and Mr. Pitt, seemed to mark the end of effective monarchy in England. The Cabinet had replaced the throne; and the sovereign, at the death of George II, had become a costly (if not particularly decorative) dignity with purely ceremonial functions. The Birthday, the *Levée*, the Drawing-room were his occasions; and he was expected to perform these exacting duties, moving with due solemnity through a respectful forest of white wands and gold sticks. He might even add a military touch from time to time with a review or so, or give a bright example of royal condescension with an occasional act of charity in the more benevolent modern taste. But his main, his foremost duty was to smile and, at the appropriate moment, to incline his head. The King, in a word, had dwindled into royalty.

George was designed by Providence to play this amiable part. His physical equipment was sufficient, and the mental strain was not severe. His deportment satisfied the exacting standards of his age. He sat his throne, "graceful and genteel"; he read quite distinctly little speeches

composed by other people; and in the Circle he "walks about and speaks to everybody" instead of standing, as a courtier wrote with a graceful reminiscence of his predecessor, "in one place, with his eyes fixed royally on the ground, and dropping bits of German news." The prevalent refinement seemed to have refined the coarse art of kingship into a sort of minuet. It was almost a dancing-master's business; and the formal movements, the royal airs and graces, and the ritual acts were well within George's range.

But some unhappy prompting set him a larger task. The middle years of the Eighteenth Century witnessed in almost every part of Europe a queer, belated revival of monarchy. Its inspiration came, perhaps, from the splendid pageant of autocracy through which the *Grand Monarque* had walked at Versailles. The gilt, the marble, the long perspective of respectful courtiers had stirred the envy of half the kings in Europe; and their emulation gave a sharp tilt to the falling scale of royal authority. The Seventeenth Century had been an age of ministers; but the succeeding generations saw the kings assert themselves once more. They built great palaces and enamelled the ceilings with vast, impending goddesses; they ruled solemn vistas through the formal verdure of state gardens, with "pyramidal yews, *treillages*, and square cradle walks, with windows clipped in them"; and, stranger still, they resumed the government of their astonished countries. All Prussia was a rapier in the steady hand of Frederick; Austrian policy followed the changing moods of the Empress; and far to the north a stout, jewelled lady controlled the slow advance of Russia. Even in Spain there was a brisk revival of authority; and the scared Portuguese were bullied into progress by Pombal, as the new, glaring streets of Lisbon rose slowly in the sunshine from the dust of the earthquake. So George was in the mode when he resolved to be a King.

This project was almost the sole fruit of his meagre education. He had learned no law from Blackstone; but Lord Bute and the Jacobite pamphlets taught him a stranger lesson. George learned that he should be a King: it was his tragedy that no one taught him how to be one. His furtive study of high Stuart doctrine impressed the slow mind; ill-equipped persons are frequently consoled for their inadequacy by a belief in their sacred mission. If King James had been right (and his early reading taught George to think so), the Lord's anointed must surely be something more than a graceful gesture in a gilt chair, or an obliging signature on official sheepskins. And if, under the Whig dispensation, the royal function had almost come to that, then the Whigs must be wrong. So George, in his effort to be a King, turned Tory. There was, indeed, a Tory pattern of kingship ready to hand. The

conduct of an ideal Tory on the throne had been foretold by the strange fancy of Bolingbroke; and George stumbled hopefully into the steps prescribed by that agile person for his *Patriot King*.

Defeated parties are frequently unanimous upon the impropriety of party government. Minorities are always apt to be stern critics of popular folly; and Tory thought, in the first years of Whig domination, harped on the vice of faction. But its main obsession was still the sanctity of kingship; and Bolingbroke, when he reeled back defeated from the hopeless task of imparting ideas to the exiled Stuarts and resumed the less exacting functions of a Tory oracle, blended the two notions into a strange amalgam. His friends were out of place; but he refreshed them with an odd vision of office. A new sort of monarch was to "espouse no party . . . but govern like the common father of his people." This chimera "must begin to govern as soon as he begins to reign"; and to achieve his purpose he will "call into the administration such men as he can assure himself will serve on the same principles on which he intends to govern." Such men, since the Whigs were unlikely bedfellows for an autocrat, must clearly be Tories; and in this happy dream, the dejected friends of Bolingbroke would march back into office behind the triumphant banner of "the most popular man in his country and a patriot king at the head of a united people." The bright vision faded; and in the grey light Sir Robert Walpole was ruling England for the Whig families and the German king, whom they had brought from Hanover. Even when Mr. Pitt controlled the nation, he preferred to lean on a Whig duke. So George, who wished to be King above all parties, found party in the ascendant on his coming in.

This queer young man, whom no one knew, set out to transform the government of his country; and, to a strange degree, he was successful. The odds were remarkable. The King's resources were his slender personal equipment, the vague prestige of a new reign, his mother's guidance, and the friendship of a Scotch Earl. With singular courage (and courage never failed him) he gathered these slight forces for an attack on the Whig system. A more intelligent man, one feels, would have discarded the attempt as hopeless. But George's nerve was unimpeded by sagacity; and he succeeded. The Whig façade in 1760 was impressive; Whiggery was entrenched in Parliament behind the serried rows of Newcastle's placemen; and its chosen minister, Mr. Pitt, was conquering half the world. "Two victories every week" formed an inspiring diet for civilians; and a cheering town responded with huzzas and fireworks, whilst the distant boom of the Park guns answered the salvos from the Tower. The world observed Lord Bute at the King's elbow and made little jokes about Pitt-coal, Newcastle-coal

or (hateful alternative) Scotch-coal. The King alarmed opinion with an announcement that he gloried "in the name of Briton," which sounds to posterity a brave denial of his German origins; but for contemporaries it had the more sinister ring of an admission that Scotland was in his thoughts. There was a Scotch Earl on the back stairs; and the town was not averse to little stories about "the *Signora-Madre*." Then, on the full tide of victory, Mr. Pitt was adroitly parted from the Whigs. His Olympian air prepared the way. That eye, that hooked, commanding nose, which awed the House of Commons, were merely intolerable in council. For almost six years he had monopolised the control of war and foreign affairs; and British armies followed British fleets to victory in three continents. But infallible pontiffs are rarely popular with their colleagues. An issue (upon which he was plainly right) was raised in Cabinet. The oracle spoke; but the priests refused to listen. He was exasperated into resignation; and when the Whigs lost Mr. Pitt, they forfeited their sole claim to popular esteem. The oracle retired to Bath; and as the priests sat on in the temple, the outer courts were slowly emptying.

The King had made his breach in the walls of the Whig system, and the Scotch Earl became his minister. Whiggery trailed sadly into Opposition or assumed the new livery. The King, like all opponents of the party system, recruited a new party briskly. Its principles were obscure; but its advantages, since the King's Friends were grouped conveniently round the fountain of honour, were obvious. The opinions of the House of Commons were governed through its appetite for places; and Masters of the Buckhounds followed Admirals of the Red into the lobby, whilst Comptrollers of the Green Cloth, Rangers of St. James's Park, and Verdurers of Whichwood Forest abandoned their absorbing duties in order to support Government in the congenial company of Lords of the Bedchamber and Governors of the Isle of Wight. For nine years the King worked steadily to impose his system. Sometimes he seemed to reach the goal, and his proud mother cried: "Now my son *is* King of England." Sometimes the dark forces of Whiggery returned upon him in the dreary form of George Grenville or the blameless incarnation of Lord Rockingham. Once there was a queer resurrection of Mr. Pitt; but he was hastily reburied under the dignity of Lord Chatham, and the patient King went on. It was a strange struggle; and it was waged against an even stranger background.

England, in the ten years between the accession of George III and the ministry of Lord North, was an odd blend of hysteria and decorum. The poets scanned; the magazines abounded in formal eloquence; and taverns echoed with the sonorous antiphonies of Johnson. The great

world solemnly pursued the grave inanities of the Eighteenth Century. It dressed its hair; it played at ombre; it sat sedately through interminable plays. Mr. Walpole, up to the knees in shavings, fortified his home with gingerbread breastworks and asked the town to view the battlements, or pelted Sir Horace with commissions to buy up half the *brocadella* in Florence for his hangings. But beyond this decorous scene something was stirring. An odd ferment seemed to threaten the trim dignity of the age. Excited gentlemen defied propriety in hell-fire clubs; and less select assemblies grew strangely violent. There had been queer frenzies earlier in the century, when Sacheverell drove through the roaring streets, and later when half the world ran mad on stock-jobbing. But the crowds (even Mr. Walpole called it "the century of crowds") seemed madder than ever in the new reign. At first they stood to watch the little Queen come in, then stared at a Coronation, and mobbed the streets between-whiles to huzza for Pitt and Martinico or the Havannah. But their pleasant tumult dropped sharply to a deeper note as the town was swept by an odd fever; and astonished Liberty beheld the strange apostolate of Mr. Wilkes.

This indecorous, cross-eyed figure became an emblem of popular disorder upon one of those points of law by which the passionate interest of Englishmen is sometimes engaged. His private tastes lay in a simpler direction and had inspired him with an ambition to represent his country in the matrimonially congenial atmosphere of Constantinople. Failing of this, he declined in disappointment upon popular journalism and abused the Court with gusto. Involved in a welter of duels and litigation, his name became an excuse for unlimited mobbing. The tumult deepened; and for a few years the London streets were a vulgar replica of Rome in the crowded, angry days of the dying Republic, when Milo's *bravi* fought with Clodius. Bute was scared out of public life, or effaced himself to save his master; but the King persisted. It was apparently no part of the duty of a *Patriot King* to be popular; and he faced the mobs without flinching. For he had always courage. Then, gradually, the tide of disorder ebbed. The voice of authority became faintly audible above the sound of breaking glass; and when it came, it spoke in the King's name. The Whigs were quite subdued now; and England was governed by George himself through a peering, pouting minister with "the air of a blind trumpeter." It was the year 1770, and Lord North was waiting sedately in the wings.

## III

Personal government depends for its success upon two factors, the person and the governed. When a rare conjunction unites administra-

tive talent with a docile or a sympathetic people, the world is presented with the strange miracle of successful autocracy. But how rare such unions are. Capacity, infrequent among statesmen, is still less frequent among kings; and docility, west of the Vistula, has been extinct among subjects for almost three centuries. A national impulse rarely coincides with a monarch's wishes. The case, of course, is not unknown; the laborious versatility of Frederick might drive an obedient Prussia, and the universal competence of Napoleon found its true partner in the French energy released by a national revolution. But these are the rare triumphs of monarchy. More often, far more often, a distracted autocrat fumbles with his work; or a nation, disinclined to play its humble part, renders it impossible. If the ruler is unequal to his high position, autocracy fails. If his subjects withhold consent to his wide authority, it fails as gravely. The sole possibility of success for personal government lies in the combination of an adequate person with a consenting people; and its failures, for lack of that rare conjunction, are more numerous than its successes.

The King's experiment was sadly deficient in both elements. Viewed as a candidate for autocracy, George was singularly unimpressive; even Bolingbroke, one feels, would have been discouraged by the spectacle of his *Patriot King* in action. The patient, punctual creature minuting his correspondence with the hour of despatch; directing at "2 min. pt. 11 a.m." the march of some cavalry from Henley to Hounslow; consenting at "53 min. pt. 5 p.m." to the appointment of a Mr. Fountayne to the living of Worplesdon; complaining at "12 min. pt. 10 p.m." that if James Adam is appointed Surveyor-General to the Board of Works, he "shall certainly think it hard on Chambers, and shall in that case only think he must not be passed by"; insisting at "57 min. pt. 11 a.m." that the new prebendary of Durham must "continue to attend the young Chancellor"; this plodding figure, stooping over his green box in the candle-light and holding the papers close to his face before he traced the big G.R., seems so remote from the high dream of kingship. "The common father of his people . . ." and a light burning late in the Queen's House, where an angry man was writing little hints to the Common Council for unseating Mr. Alderman Wilkes. "The most popular man in his country . . ." noting gentlemen of the House of Commons to receive a frown at the *Levée* for an injudicious vote. "A patriot king at the head of a united people . . ." pelting a driven Minister with little punctual notes. How far they seem, those busy, irritable little figures, below that imagined monarch who was to sit enthroned above the clouds of party and bathed in the pure sunlight of autocracy. His teachers had urged him to be a King; and someone, it seemed, had

taught him to be a passable Patronage Secretary. Clerks in his Treasury formed such habits; industrious merchants sought vainly to impart them to their sons; and his intellectual counterparts crouched on tall stools in counting-houses east of Temple Bar.

Yet he was not content to drug himself with the deadly narcotic of administrative detail. For he was King; and policy, as well as patronage, claimed the royal attention. Patronage was his *forte*, and it served well enough as a solvent of most domestic problems. He set about to govern England single-handed. Now, there was a House of Commons to be perpetually shielded from unwholesome influences, and George went in pursuit of political purity down unusual paths. The minor disorder of elections was cured with "gold pills"; and the tiresome scruples of elected persons yielded on most occasions to a gracious nod from the throne and a word behind Lord North's hand, followed after a becoming interval by a line in the *London Gazette* and a precious package from the Pay Office on quarter-day. The King, by this simple artifice, was his own First Minister and Chief Whip. His deputy sat dozing in the House of Commons, ran errands for his master, and stoutly maintained that the office of Prime Minister was unknown to the Constitution. The King had formed a party, led it, satisfied its simple needs, and maintained it in office. To that extent his experiment in personal government was verging towards success at home. The Whigs were helpless; since Parliament was for the King, and they professed to believe in government by Parliament. They roared in debate; they brought down votes "in flannels and blankets, till the floor of the House looked like the pool of Bethesda." But they were outvoted and retired to mutter in the deep libraries of country houses. Nothing seemed to remain in opposition except the City and the mob. But the Mansion House, strange temple of democracy, was a mere nest of preposterous Aldermen; and if the mob stirred, there were still the Guards.

George governed England with an odd blend of force and persuasion; and his subjects seemed curiously content to acquiesce. He had made peace; and great liberties are permitted to statesmen who make peace. He had unseated Mr. Pitt; but Mr. Pitt had made his name grotesque with a peerage. He challenged democracy; but democracy, in 1765, stood for little beyond the mob. Men had died for Hampden; but it would be fantastic to die for Mr. Wilkes. It almost seemed, at home, that it was possible to govern an empire with the arts of a Chief Whip. But one section of his people presented a queer, unyielding obstacle. Three thousand miles from the *Levée*, six weeks away from Lord North's significant smile, the Americans still persisted in their tedious debate. The ripe intelligence of Mr. Grenville had de-



vised some taxes for them. Taxes, it seemed, were the common lot of victorious nations. So that imperial mind, which added the Isle of Man to the British Empire, sent stamps to Boston that inspired a strange repugnance. Mr. Grenville was frankly baffled. He had drawn the scheme (and he was at home in the schedule of a revenue Bill), because the neat device of stamps appealed irresistibly to that orderly mind. He had looked up the law (and he was a fair lawyer) and discovered the helpful precedent of the Channel Islands. Yet it was odd that mobs paraded in the clear American light and local orators abounded in deep-chested sentiments about liberty: perhaps the colour of the stamps was wrong. Then the grave leaders of the Whig groups faced the strange problem (and even Mr. Walpole began to notice that it was a "thorny point"). Mr. Grenville had thought of stamps; they thought of tea; few men in England thought of a larger issue. Then the Whigs subsided; and the King (with him, Lord North) resumed control of his bewildered empire. That he grasped the American issue is improbable. It was enough for that determined, angry man that the law of England had been defied on British territory. Wilkites in Southwark or Sons of Liberty in King Street, Boston, were the same to him; the troops must do their duty. Men who had ridden out the wild storm of the Middlesex election were not likely to parley with a mob; and at a distance of three thousand miles the solemn ratiocinations of a Boston town meeting were indistinguishable from the Brentford rabble. Even if he reflected, it was unlikely that the King would side with the colonists. Had he not learnt the sanctity of authority in a stiff Jacobite school? Passive obedience was the first duty of a loyal subject. Admirable in Great Britain, this virtue was yet more essential in America, since colonies (it was the lesson of his master Bolingbroke) were "like so many farms of the mother country." George was a farmer; and the strange claim of one of his farms to be consulted about its cultivation was clearly inadmissible.

The angry voices rose higher in the deepening tumult; and as the scattered shots rang out down the long road to Concord on a spring day in 1775, the argument drifted into civil war. The King was firm. Indeed he had already fortified his resolution with the advice of the sagacious Gage. The conversation of military men upon political topics is a rare stimulant for civilians; and that warrior had persuaded his sovereign that the Americans "will be lyons whilst we are lambs; but, if we take the resolute part, they will undoubtedly prove very meek." In this hopeful mood he flogged the Boston Port Act through Parliament and hallooed Lord North to hunt the Opposition through the lobbies. He was still "well convinced they will soon submit," as Israel

Putnam drove his sheep to Boston and Colonel Washington insisted warily that it was "a folly to attempt more than we can execute." The issue looked so simple in St. James's; and as the American tone hardened, the King could only ejaculate, "The dye is now cast, the colonies must either submit or triumph." But his mood was not one of blind repression. Like all Englishmen on the verge of a practical concession, he insisted firmly on his technical rights: "I do not wish to come to severer measures, but we must not retreat; by coolness and an unremitted pursuit of the measures that have been adopted I trust they will come to submit; I have no objection afterwards to their seeing that there is no inclination for the present to lay fresh taxes on them, but I am clear there must always be one tax to keep up the right, and as such I approve of the Tea Duty." So the student of Blackstone pressed his point of law, seeking little more than an admission which might cover his retreat. How many solicitors have been instructed to threaten proceedings in that confident tone. Unhappily he knew too little of men to measure the results of his threat. The lonely boy had become a lonely man; and his solitude was increased by the still lonelier elevation of a throne. He saw his fellow-creatures down the warped perspective of a king. But some instinct might have told him that Englishmen, in Boston or in Westminster Hall, willing enough to make all practical concessions, rarely give up a point of law. That, in essence, was his own attitude in the argument; and he lacked the wit to see that other men might feel the same. He knew so little of other men; and those incalculable creatures in America remained a mystery upon the far horizon of the world.

But when his challenge was accepted, when the expected lambs declined to play their part, he entered with gusto upon the detail of the war. Provisions for the army, the loan of infantry from Hanover, a purchase of recruits in Hesse-Cassel, sea strategy, dates of embarkation, biscuit and flour, the beating orders for enlisting Campbells, Gordons, and Macdonalds, plans of campaign, and news of privateers passed rapidly under the busy pen at Kew or the Queen's House. He watched the war like an eager parent, sailed the crowded troop-ships in imagination from Hamburg to Sandy Hook, and followed his red-coats, as the winding line of bayonets vanished into the darkness of the great trees. Dimly he saw that personal government had met the fatal challenge of an unconsenting people. He seemed to feel that he was fighting for the throne of England; because if England thought with the unhappy rebels, "I should not esteem my situation in this country as a very dignified one, for the islands would soon cast off all obedience." It was (he saw the issue now) the decisive struggle of authority against

all the dark forces which had ever opposed him, against the Whigs, against the mob, against the grinning mask of Wilkes and the sonorous tutorship of Chatham, against Mr. Burke and his heresies and the insidious logic of Dr. Franklin. George saw all his enemies gathered into the head of a single rebellion, and struck hard. The swelling strength of the Opposition alarmed Lord North; but the King's nerve was steady. "Whilst any ten men in the kingdom will stand by me, I will not give myself up into bondage. My dear Lord, I will rather risk my crown"—the sprawling hand wrote firmly on—"than do what I think personally disgraceful; and whilst I have no wish but for the good and prosperity of my country, it is impossible that the nation shall not stand by me; if they will not, they shall have another king, for I will never put my hand to what would make me miserable to the last hour of my life."

The French guns chimed in, as Versailles discovered a pleasing coincidence of romantic impulse with national interest; and for a moment he seemed almost to face the certainty of surrender in the revolted colonies. But "I will never consent that in any treaty that may be concluded a single word be mentioned concerning Canada, Nova Scotia, or the Floridas, which are colonies belonging to this country . . . for it is by them we are to keep a certain awe over the abandoned colonies." The issue had travelled far beyond taxation. In Europe it was now a war of existence with an ancient enemy; and in America it raised the vital problem of secession. That question was to haunt the continent for ninety years, and George stated it in terms which strangely anticipate the American echoes of a century later: "If Lord North can see with the same degree of enthusiasm I do the beauty, excellence, and perfection of the British constitution as by law established, and consider that, if any one branch of the empire is allowed to cast off its dependency, that the others will infallibly follow the example,"—how odd to find the thought of Lincoln in the mind of George III!—"that consequently, though an arduous struggle, that is worth going through any difficulty to preserve to latest posterity what the wisdom of our ancestors have carefully transmitted to us, he will not allow dependency to find a place in his breast, but resolve not merely out of duty to fill his post, but will resolve with vigour to meet every obstacle that may arise, he shall meet with most cordial support from me; but the times require vigour, or the state will be ruined." That cry, half strangled by the long, tortuous sentence, is not ignoble. The tenacious man, who stumbled into war in blind resentment of disorder, had a wider vision. The King could see the issue now; and, granted the fatal difference between autocracy and republic, he saw it almost with the eyes of 1861: "I own that, let any war be ever so successful, if persons will sit down and

weigh the expenses, they will find, as in the last, that it has impoverished the state, enriched individuals, and perhaps raised the name only of the conquerors; but this is only weighing such events in the scale of a tradesman behind his counter; it is necessary for those in the station it has pleased Divine Providence to place me, to weigh whether expenses, though very great, are not sometimes necessary to prevent what might be more ruinous to a country than the loss of money. The present contest with America I cannot help seeing as the most serious in which any country was ever engaged; it contains such a train of consequences that they must be examined to feel its real weight. Whether the laying of a tax was deserving all the evils that have arisen from it, I should suppose no man could allege that without being more fit for Bedlam than a seat in the Senate; but step by step the demands of America have arisen; independence is their object; that certainly is one which every man not willing to sacrifice every object to a *momentary* and inglorious peace must concur with me in thinking that this country can never submit to: should America succeed in that, the West Indies must follow them . . . Ireland would soon follow the same plan and be a separate state; then this island would be reduced to itself, and soon would be a poor island indeed . . .”

The harassed man at Kew wrote on; and three thousand miles away the guns were booming in the summer sunshine of 1779. His courage held; he searched himself with “frequent and severe self-examination.” When the news was good, he prepared to show America “that the parent’s heart is still affectionate to the penitent child.” When it was bad, he reflected that “in this world it is not right alone to view evils, but to consider whether they can be avoided, and what means are the most efficacious.” In this sturdy temper he held on, defying the Opposition, heartening the pardonably despondent North. On a July day in 1781, he was still insisting that “this long contest will end as it ought, by the colonies returning to the mother country, and I confess I will never put my hand to any other conclusion of this business.” But in those hot summer weeks a tired army was trailing about Virginia behind Cornwallis. At the fall of the year they stood behind a line of battered earthworks by the York River. The French lay off the coast; and in the sloping fields beyond the little town the parallels crept slowly nearer. There was a steady roll of musketry. Then the British guns fell silent; and the war was ended.

## IV

Four years later, on a dark winter afternoon Miss Burney was mildly startled by a visitor. They were playing Christmas games after dinner

in Mrs. Delany's little drawing-room at Windsor, when the door opened quietly. It closed again behind "a large man in deep mourning," whom no one except Miss Burney seemed to notice. He said nothing; but as that sharp little eye travelled down the black suit, it encountered, heavens! the glitter of a star. Then one of the young ladies turned round on him, stifled a scream, and called out, "The King!—Aunt, the King!" The little company backed uneasily into the corners of the room; and presently there was a loud royal whisper of "Is that Miss Burney?" Her sovereign bowed politely; and the talk ran upon the whooping-cough, which prevailed in the royal nursery, and James's Powders, which Princess Elizabeth found so beneficial. Then he rained little questions on her; how she came to write *Evelina*, how to publish, how to print without a word to her father. Urged by the royal *What!* she said with a simper that she had "thought it would look very well in print." The awkward questioning went on, until a rap at the door announced the Queen, and someone slid out for candles to light the ugly little lady in.

Another day the royal mind was easier. The children were off to Kew for a change of air, and James's miraculous powders had done their work; so the talk ran on books. Voltaire was "a monster—I own it fairly." Rousseau was thought of "with more favour, though by no means with approbation." And Shakespeare—"was there ever such stuff as great part of Shakespeare? Only one must not say so! But what think you?—What?—Is there not sad stuff?—What?—what?" Miss Burney temporised. But her sovereign enjoyed his little heresy and laughed. "Oh! I know it is not to be said! but it's true. Only it's Shakespeare, and nobody dare abuse him." So the arch monarch developed his wicked theme and shocked the bookish lady—"but," as the coy iconoclast confessed, "one should be stoned for saying so!"

The "fatal day" had come, bringing an end to the strange experiment of personal government. At home he dwindled by slow degrees into an almost constitutional monarch; and overseas Mr. Jay read with some surprise that when Mr. Adams made his bow as ambassador, the King had stifled all resentment in a graceful confession—"I will be very frank with you. I was the last to conform to the separation; but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent power."

This pleasant, ageing, stoutish man, with his odd, jerky questions and his staring eyes, slowly became a ceremonial monarch of the standard Hanoverian pattern; displaying, on the appropriate occasions, a becoming versatility of martial and civilian accomplishments; stroll-

ing in the evening light on the Terrace at Windsor, surrounded by a family that was a Court in itself; admiring Miss Burney in the famous lilac tabby which the Queen gave her; pressing the remedial virtues of barley-water upon an exhausted colonel after a hard day in the hunting field; trotting, gnawed by the incurable inquisitiveness of royalty, into half the shops in Windsor; taking, after a more than usually incompetent attempt on his life, "his accustomed doze" at the theatre; peering, smiling, bowing. This amiable, domestic, elderly person, with his little jokes and the quick, questioning *What?—what?* forms a queer postscript to the high adventure of the young, friendless King, who set out to govern England and lost America. It all seemed so far away now. Mr. Wilkes had faded, Mr. Pitt had died in that theatrical way of his; Lord North was still living somewhere, but he was quite blind now. The King lived on, before all else a father and a husband, the Georgian head of an oddly Victorian court.

But he had still, had always his courage. It had not failed him on "Black Wednesday," when at the height of the war the mob ran wild for "No Popery" and Lord George Gordon. The streets were alight with the disordered worship of this singular idol, whose evangelical quest for a form of Christianity uncorrupted by Popish additions finally led him, by the fatal logic of a Scotsman or a lunatic, into a clear air where it was uncontaminated even by a Saviour. London passed sleepless nights and crept about behind its shutters. But the King informed his Council that, if the Riot Act was to be read before the troops could fire into the crowds, one magistrate at least would do his duty and then could take command of his Guards in person. The same even temper bore him up when a mad woman thrust a knife at him one afternoon outside the garden door at St. James's. He steadied the crowd, went in to hold his *Levée*, and then drove down to Windsor to show himself to the Queen. Three royal persons and two ladies in waiting mingled their tears. But the careful King enquired, "Has she cut my waistcoat? Look! for I have had no time to examine." His courage barely failed beneath the slow, dreadful gathering of a darker cloud, which hung above him. That he saw its coming is almost certain. Little doubt is left by his choking exclamation, "I wish to God I may die, for I am going to be mad." Then, staring with pitiable eyes at the ebbing tide of reason, he faded into insanity.

Once he returned; and for ten years he presided over the state where he had reigned. The Whigs were out; but England was ruled by a minister again, and Mr. Pitt—there was a new Mr. Pitt now, whose "damned long ugly face" was almost as trying as Chatham's eye—sat in his father's seat. The *Patriot King* had declined into dogeship, al-

though there was a faint flicker of the old authority, when the minister roused his sovereign's Churchmanship with some nonsense about equality for Irish Papists. He rode; he played piquet; he bathed in the loyal waves of Weymouth. There was a pleasant jingle of Light Dragoons on the little Esplanade, and his troopers lounged in their sunny Capua beside the Wessex sea—

When we lay where Budmouth Beach is,  
O, the girls were fresh as peaches  
With their tall and tossing figures and their eyes of blue and brown!  
And our hearts would ache with longing  
As we paced from our sing-songing,  
With a smart *Clink! Clink!* up the Esplanade and down.

The bathing-women all wore "God save the King" on ample girdles round their waists; and as the royal person plunged, that pious invocation burst from the muffled fiddlers in a bathing-machine. He strolled again upon the Terrace at Windsor. But this time his airing was a martial exercise. For the French guns were speaking across Europe, and George called for the band to play, "Britons, strike home." So the old man (he was rising seventy now) confronted Buonaparte. He grasped, one feels, as little of the strange forces which opposed him as of the American tangle. He did little more than clench an English fist and shake it in the face of France.

But whilst he struggled to retain the last remains of sight, his watchful frigates kept the sea; his guns rang out where the Spanish hills dip to Trafalgar, and his red-coats stared at the cactus along the dusty roads of Portugal. Then, once again, a cloud swung over the sun and his sky darkened. The war went on; there was a steady thunder of guns in Europe, until at the last they stood smoking in the sodden fields by Waterloo. But the King sat muttering in a closed room at Windsor. He was far away in a pleasant world, where he gave interminable audiences to dead ministers. For hours, for days, for years he talked with them; and sometimes he made himself a little music on an old spinet, which had been silent since Queen Anne. Then he faded out of life; and on a winter night in 1820 Mr. Croker watched the mourners marshalling and heard the dismal note of horns from the Great Park.

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# King George the Fourth

SIR MAX BEERBOHM (1872- )

Max Beerbohm returned to England in 1938 after almost thirty years spent mainly in Italy, where he had lived, with his American wife from Memphis, at Villino Chiaro, Rapallo. He was knighted upon his return, but his reputation had been made many years before. Back in the 1890's he had been, with Aubrey Beardsley, one of the most discussed of the new *Yellow Book* contributors; and other journals of the *fin de siècle*, *Vanity Fair* and *Pick-Me-Up*, had printed his sprightly early work. When Bernard Shaw quitted his post as dramatic critic for the *Saturday Review*, he introduced "the incomparable Max" as his successor. But Beerbohm married in 1910 and took up his long residence in Italy. In 1896, when only twenty-four, he had collected seven of his early essays and sketches, with an accompanying bibliography, under the humorous title *Works of Max Beerbohm*. "For my own part," said he, "I am a dilettante, a *petit-maitre*. I love best in literature delicate and elaborate ingenuities in form and style." His delightful informal essays have appeared in *Works* (1896), *Yet Again* (1909), *And Even Now* (1920), *More* (1922), *Things New and Old* (1923), and *A Variety of Things* (1928). The very breath and finer spirit of civilized gaiety and irony is wafted from the best of these pages; he writes on dandies, the perversions of rouge, actors, Mme. Tussaud's waxwork effigies, laughter, and many other themes. *Zuleika Dobson* (1912) has become a minor classic of the novel. *The Happy Hypocrite* (1897), "a fairy tale for tired men," the fanciful story of Lord George Hell, the Regency rake, metamorphosed under the mask of a saint, worn to win the love of a fragile little dancer, and *The Dreadful Dragon of Hay Hill* (1928) are works of fiction and fantasy too little known in America. The two volumes of *Around Theatres* (1930) are a collection of Beerbohm's essays on the plays, dramatists, actors, and theatres of his time. These too have the inimitable Beerbohm stamp upon them; dramatic criticism ceases to be a workaday craft of the newspaper journeyman—it takes on form, wit, style. But Sir Max's reputation is not alone a literary one. Equally gifted with pen, pencil, and brush, he is a caricaturist whose drawings are everywhere known and enjoyed. In "The Spirit of Caricature" (from *A Variety of Things*) he describes the perfect caricature as "that which, on a small surface, with the simplest means, most accurately exaggerates to the highest point, the peculiarities of a human being, at his most characteristic moment, in the most beautiful manner." In his own drawings this simplicity of means which seizes on dominant features, to emphasize and exaggerate them satirically in the fewest possible essential lines, is partly illustrated. *The Poet's Corner* (1904), *A*



*Survey* (1921), *Rossetti and His Circle* (1922), and *Observations* (1925) are collections of his drawings. He has said that his art is to caricature strength by singling out its weak points.

In 1921 this famous caricaturist, parodist, and essayist wrote, "My gifts are small. I've used them well and discreetly, never straining them, and the result is that I've made a charming little reputation." This is typical of his sense of proportion and of his delightful urbanity, though he understates his claim to fame. He has been one of the most graceful stylists of his time, one of its keenest satirists. A short, rather dandified figure, with round head, small hands and feet, a mild, cultivated voice, and an air of "cherubic modesty," he has long been a sort of Puck in frock coat on the international literary scene. There is of course a dandiacal quality in his prose—a careful elegance, deliberately "jewelled with exotic words." The wit is part of this jewelled elegance; as Holbrook Jackson said, his "wit is the dandyism of the mind."

Character has been one of Beerbohm's main concerns, of course, as a caricaturist and writer; he is a penetrating psychologist with a gift for shrewd epitome. But, aside from the memoir of his brother, the famous actor, included with tributes by Shaw, Gosse, and others in *Herbert Beerbohm Tree: Some Memories of Him and of His Art* [n. d.], he has been concerned very little with what we call biography. His sketch of George IV, a dandy among monarchs, reprinted below from *Works*, antedates Lytton Strachey's epochal sketches, of course, but is included here because of its intrinsic merits and because it illustrates a graceful treatment of biographical matter within the loose framework and in the discursive manner of the informal, personal essay.

THEY SAY THAT WHEN KING GEORGE WAS DYING, a special form of prayer for his recovery, composed by one of the Archbishops, was read aloud to him and that His Majesty, after saying Amen "thrice, with great fervour," begged that his thanks might be conveyed to its author. To the student of royalty in modern times there is something rather suggestive in this incident. I like to think of the drug-scented room at Windsor and of the King, livid and immobile among his pillows, waiting, in superstitious awe, for the near moment when he must stand, a spirit, in the presence of a perpetual King. I like to think of him following the futile prayer with eyes and lips, and then, custom resurgent in him and a touch of pride that, so long as the blood moved ever so little in his veins, he was still a king, expressing a desire that the dutiful feeling and admirable taste of the Prelate should receive a suitable acknowledgment. It would have been impossible for a real monarch like George, even after the gout had turned his thoughts

From *Works*, by Max Beerbohm. Used by permission of the publishers, Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc.

heavenward, really to abase himself before his Maker. But he could, so to say, treat with Him, as he might have treated with a fellow-sovereign, in a formal way, long after diplomacy was quite useless. How strange it must be to be a king! How delicate and difficult a task it is to judge him! So far as I know, no attempt has been made to judge King George the Fourth fairly. The hundred and one eulogies and lampoons, irresponsibly published during and immediately after his reign, are not worth a wooden hoop in Hades. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has published a history of George's reign, in which he has so artistically subordinated his own personality to his subject, that I can scarcely find, from beginning to end of the two bulky volumes, a single opinion expressed, a single idea, a single deduction from the admirably ordered facts. All that most of us know of George is from Thackeray's brilliant denunciation. Now, I yield to few in my admiration of Thackeray's powers. He had a charming style. We never find him searching for the *mot juste* as for a needle in a bottle of hay. Could he have looked through a certain window by the river at Croisset or in the quadrangle at Brasenose, how he would have laughed! He blew on his pipe, and words came tripping round him, like children, like pretty little children who are perfectly drilled for the dance, or came, did he will it, treading in their precedence, like kings, gloomily. And I think it is to the credit of the reading mob that, by reason of his beautiful style, all that he said was taken for the truth, without questioning. But truth after all is eternal, and style transient, and now that Thackeray's style is becoming, if I may say so, a trifle 1860, it may not be amiss that we should inquire whether his estimate of George is in substance and fact worth anything at all. It seems to me that, as in his novels, so in his history of the four Georges, Thackeray made no attempt at psychology. He dealt simply with types. One George he insisted upon regarding as a buffoon, another as a yokel. The fourth George he chose to hold up for reprobation as a drunken, vapid cad. Every action, every phase of his life that went to disprove this view, he either suppressed or distorted utterly. "History," he would seem to have chuckled, "has nothing to do with the First Gentleman. But I will give him a niche in Natural History. He shall be King of the Beasts." He made no allowance for the extraordinary conditions under which all monarchs live, none for the unfortunate circumstances by which George, especially, was from the first hampered. He judged him as he judged Barnes Newcome and all the scoundrels he created. Moreover, he judged him by the moral standard of the Victorian Age. In fact, he applied to his subject the wrong method, in the wrong manner, and at the wrong time. And yet every one has taken him at

his word. I feel that my essay may be scouted as a paradox; but I hope that many may recognize that I am not, out of mere boredom, endeavouring to stop my ears against popular platitude, but rather, in a spirit of real earnestness, to point out to the mob how it has been cruel to George. I do not despair of success. I think I shall make converts. The mob is really very fickle and sometimes cheers the truth.

None, at all events, will deny that England stands to-day otherwise than she stood a hundred and thirty-two years ago, when George was born. To-day we are living a decadent life. All the while that we are prating of progress, we are really so deteriorate! There is nothing but feebleness in us. Our youths, who spend their days in trying to build up their constitutions by sport or athletics and their evenings in undermining them with poisonous and dyed drinks; our daughters, who are ever searching for some new quack remedy for new imaginary megrim, what strength is there in them? We have our societies for the prevention of this and the promotion of that and the propagation of the other, because there are no individuals among us. Our sexes are already nearly assimilate. Women are becoming nearly as rare as ladies, and it is only at the music-halls that we are privileged to see strong men. We are born into a poor, weak age. We are not strong enough to be wicked, and the Nonconformist Conscience makes cowards of us all.

But this was not so in the days when George was walking by his tutor's side in the gardens of Kew or of Windsor. London must have been a splendid place in those days—full of life and colour and wrong and revelry. There was no absurd press nor vestry to protect the poor at the expense of the rich and see that everything should be neatly adjusted. Every man had to shift for himself and, consequently, men were, as Mr. Clement Scott would say, manly, and women, as Mr. Clement Scott would say, womanly. In those days, a young man of wealth and family found open to him a vista of such licence as had been unknown to any since the *barbatuli* of the Roman Empire. To spend the early morning with his valet, gradually assuming the rich apparel that was not then tabooed by a hard sumptuary standard; to saunter round to White's for ale and tittle-tattle and the making of wagers; to attend a "drunken *déjeuner*" in honour of "*la très belle Rosaline*" or the Strappini; to drive some fellow-fool far out into the country in his pretty curricule, "followed by two well-dressed and well-mounted grooms, of singular elegance certainly," and stop at every tavern on the road to curse the host for not keeping better ale and a wench of more charm; to reach St. James's in time for a random toilet and so off to dinner. Which of *our* dandies could survive a day of pleasure such as this? Which would be ready, dinner done, to scamper

off again to Ranelagh and dance and skip and sup in the rotunda there? Yet the youth of that period would not dream of going to bed or ever he had looked in at Crockford's—*tanta lubido rerum*—for a few hours' faro.

This was the kind of life that young George found opened to him, when, at length, in his nineteenth year, they gave him an establishment in Buckingham House. How his young eyes must have sparkled, and with what glad gasps must he have taken the air of freedom into his lungs! Rumour had long been busy with the damned surveillance under which his childhood had been passed. A paper of the time says significantly that "the Prince of Wales, with a spirit which does him honour, has three times requested a change in that system." King George had long postponed permission for his son to appear at any balls, and the year before had only given it, lest he should offend the Spanish Minister, who begged it as a personal favour. I know few pictures more pathetic than that of George, then an overgrown boy of fourteen, tearing the childish frill from around his neck and crying to one of the Royal servants, "See how they treat me!" Childhood has always seemed to me the tragic period of life. To be subject to the most odious espionage at the one age when you never dream of doing wrong, to be deceived by your parents, thwarted of your smallest wish, oppressed by the terrors of manhood and of the world to come, and to believe, as you are told, that childhood is the only happiness known; all this is quite terrible. And all Royal children of whom I have read, particularly George, seem to have passed through greater trials in childhood than do the children of any other class. Mr. Fitzgerald, hazarding for once an opinion, thinks that "the stupid, odious, German, sergeant-system of discipline that had been so rigorously applied was, in fact, responsible for the blemishes of the young Prince's character." Even Thackeray, in his essay upon George III, asks what wonder that the son, finding himself free at last, should have plunged, without looking, into the vortex of dissipation. In *Torrens' Life of Lord Melbourne* we learn that Lord Essex, riding one day with the King, met the young Prince wearing a wig, and that the culprit, being sternly reprimanded by his father, replied that he had "been ordered by his doctor to wear a wig, for he was subject to cold." Whereupon the King, to vent the aversion he already felt for his son, or, it may have been, glorying in the satisfactory result of his discipline, turned to Lord Essex and remarked, "A lie is ever ready when it is wanted." George never lost this early ingrained habit of lies. It is to George's childish fear of his guardians that we must trace that extraordinary power of bamboozling his courtiers, his ministry, and his mistresses that

distinguished him through his long life. It is characteristic of the man that he should himself have bitterly deplored his own untruthfulness. When, in after years, he was consulting Lady Spencer upon the choice of a governess for his child, he made this remarkable speech, "Above all, she must be taught the truth. You know that I don't speak the truth and my brothers don't, and I find it a great defect, from which I would have my daughter free. *We have been brought up badly, the Queen having taught us to equivocate.*" You may laugh at the picture of the little chubby, curly-headed fellows learning to equivocate at their mother's knee, but pray remember that the wisest master of ethics himself, in his theory of ἐξείξ ἀποδείχτιχαι, similarly raised virtues, such as telling the truth, to the level of regular accomplishments, and, before you judge poor George harshly in his entanglements of lying, think of the cruelly unwise education he had undergone.

However much we may deplore this exaggerated tyranny, by reason of its evil effect upon his moral nature, we cannot but feel glad that it existed, to afford a piquant contrast to the life awaiting him. Had he passed through the callow dissipations of Eton and Oxford, like other young men of his age, he would assuredly have lacked much of that splendid, pent vigour with which he rushed headlong into London life. He was so young and so handsome and so strong, that can we wonder if all the women fell at his feet? "The graces of his person," says one whom he honoured by an intrigue, "the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious, yet manly voice, will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene is forgotten. The polished and fascinating ingenuousness of his manners contributed not a little to enliven our promenade. He sang with exquisite taste, and the tones of his voice, breaking on the silence of the night, have often appeared to my entranced senses like more than mortal melody." But besides his graces of person, he had a most delightful wit, he was a scholar who could bandy quotations with Fox or Sheridan, and, like the young men of to-day, he knew all about Art. He spoke French, Italian, and German perfectly. Crossdill had taught him the violoncello. At first, as was right for one of his age, he cared more for the pleasures of the table and of the ring, for cards and love. He was wont to go down to Ranelagh surrounded by a retinue of bruisers—rapscallions, such as used to follow Clodius through the streets of Rome—and he loved to join in the scuffles like any commoner. Pugilism he learnt from Angelo, and he was considered by some to be a fine performer. On one occasion, too, at an *exposition d'escrime*, when he handled the foils against the *maitre*, he "was highly complimented upon his graceful postures." In fact, despite all his accomplishments, he seems to have been a thor-

oughly manly young fellow. He was just the kind of figure-head Society had long been in need of. A certain lack of tone had crept into the amusements of the *haut monde*, due, doubtless, to the lack of an acknowledged leader. The King was not yet mad, but he was always bucolic, and socially out of the question. So at the coming of his son Society broke into a gallop. Balls and masquerades were given in his honour night after night. Good Samaritans must have approved when they found that at these entertainments great ladies and courtesans brushed beautiful shoulders in utmost familiarity, but those who delighted in the high charm of society probably shook their heads. We need not, however, find it a flaw in George's social bearing that he did not check this kind of freedom. At the first, as a young man full of life, of course he took everything as it came, joyfully. No one knew better than he did, in later life, that there is a time for laughing with great ladies and a time for laughing with courtesans. But as yet it was not possible for him to exert influence. How great that influence became I will suggest hereafter.

I like to think of him as he was at this period, charging about, in pursuit of pleasure, like a young bull. The splendid taste for building had not yet come to him. His father would not hear of him patronizing the Turf. But already he was implected with a passion for dress and seems to have erred somewhat on the side of dressing up, as is the way of young men. It is fearful to think of him, as Cyrus Redding saw him, "arrayed in deep-brown velvet, silver embroidered, with cut-steel buttons, and a gold net thrown over all." Before that "gold net thrown over all," all the mistakes of his after-life seem to me to grow almost insignificant. Time, however, toned his too florid sense of costume, and we should at any rate be thankful that his imagination never deserted him. All the delightful munditiæ that we find in the contemporary "fashion-plates for gentlemen" can be traced to George himself. His were the much-approved "quadruple stock of great dimensions," the "cocked grey-beaver," "the pantaloons of mauve silk negligently crinkled," and any number of other little pomps and foibles of the kind. As he grew older and was obliged to abandon many of his more vigorous pastimes, he grew more and more enamoured of the pleasures of the wardrobe. He would spend hours, it is said, in designing coats for his friends, liveries for his servants, and even uniforms. Nor did he ever make the mistake of giving away out-moded clothes to his valets, but kept them to form what must have been the finest collection of clothes that has been seen in modern times. With a sentimentality that is characteristic of him, he would often, as he sat, crippled by gout, in his room at Windsor, direct his servant to bring him this or that

coat, which he had worn ten or twenty or thirty years before, and, when it was brought to him, spend much time in laughing or sobbing over the memories that lay in its folds. It is pleasant to know that George, during his long and various life, never forgot a coat, however long ago worn, however seldom.

But in the early days of which I speak he had not yet touched that self-conscious note which, in manner and mode of life, as well as in costume, he was to touch later. He was too violently enamoured of all around him, to think very deeply of himself. But he had already realized the tragedy of the voluptuary, which is, after a little time, not that he must go on living, but that he cannot live in two places at once. We have, at this end of the century, tempered this tragedy by the perfection of railways, and it is possible for our good Prince, whom Heaven bless, to waken to the sound of the Braemar bagpipes, while the music of Mdlle. Guilbert's latest song, cooed over the footlights of the *Concerts Parisiens*, still rings in his ears. But in the time of our Prince's illustrious great-uncle there were not railways; and we find George perpetually driving, for wagers, to Brighton and back (he had already acquired that taste for Brighton which was one of his most loveable qualities) in incredibly short periods of time. The rustics who lived along the road were well accustomed to the sight of a high, tremulous phaeton flashing past them, and the crimson face of the young prince bending over the horses. There is something absurd in representing George as, even before he came of age, a hardened and cynical profligate, an Elagabalus in trousers. His blood flowed fast enough through his veins. All his escapades were those of a healthful young man of the time. Need we blame him if he sought, every day, to live faster and more fully?

In a brief essay like this, I cannot attempt to write, as I hope one day to do, in any detail a history of George's career, during the time when he was successively Prince of Wales and Regent and King. Merely is it my wish at present to examine some of the principal accusations that have been brought against him, and to point out in what ways he has been harshly and hastily judged. Perhaps the greatest indignation against him was, and is to this day, felt by reason of his treatment of his two wives, Mrs. Fitzherbert and Queen Caroline. There are some scandals that never grow old, and I think the story of George's married life is one of them. It was a real scandal. I can feel it. It has vitality. Often have I wondered whether the blood with which the young Prince's shirt was saturate when Mrs. Fitzherbert was first induced to visit him at Carlton House, was merely red paint, or if, in a frenzy of love, he had truly gashed himself with a razor. Certain

it is that his passion for the virtuous and obdurate lady was a very real one. Lord Holland describes how the Prince used to visit Mrs. Fox, and there indulge in "the most extravagant expressions and actions—rolling on the floor, striking his forehead, tearing his hair, falling into hysterics, and swearing that he would abandon the country, forgo the crown, &c." He was indeed still a child, for Royalties, not being ever brought into contact with the realities of life, remain young for longer than other people. Cursed with a truly royal lack of self-control, he was unable to bear the idea of being thwarted in any wish. Every day he sent off couriers to Holland, whither Mrs. Fitzherbert had retreated, imploring her to return to him, offering her formal marriage. At length, as we know, she yielded to his importunity and returned. It is difficult indeed to realize exactly what was Mrs. Fitzherbert's feeling in the matter. The marriage must be, as she knew, illegal, and would lead, as Charles James Fox pointed out in his powerful letter to the Prince, to endless and intricate difficulties. For the present she could only live with him as his mistress. If, when he reached the legal age of twenty-five, he were to apply to Parliament for permission to marry her, how could permission be given, when she had been living with him irregularly? Doubtless, she was flattered by the attentions of the Heir to the Throne, but, had she really returned his passion, she would surely have preferred "any other species of connection with His Royal Highness to one leading to so much misery and mischief." Really to understand her marriage, one must look at the portraits of her that are extant. That beautiful and silly face explains much. One can well fancy such a lady being pleased to live after the performance of a mock-ceremony with a prince for whom she felt no passion. Her view of the matter can only have been social, for, in the eyes of the Church, she could only live with the Prince as his mistress. Society, however, once satisfied that a ceremony of some kind had been enacted, never regarded her as anything but his wife. The day after Fox, inspired by the Prince, had formally denied that any ceremony had taken place, "the knocker of her door," to quote her own complacent phrase, "was never still." The Duchesses of Portland, Devonshire and Cumberland were among her visitors.

How much pop-limbo has been talked about the Prince's denial of the marriage! I grant that it was highly improper to marry Mrs. Fitzherbert at all. But George was always weak and wayward, and he did, in his great passion, marry her. That he should afterwards deny it officially seems to me to have been utterly inevitable. His denial did her not the faintest damage, as I have pointed out. It was, so to speak, an official quibble, rendered necessary by the circumstances of



the case. Not to have denied the marriage in the House of Commons would have meant ruin to both of them. As months passed, more serious difficulties awaited the unhappily wedded pair. What boots it to repeat the story of the Prince's great debts and desperation? It was clear that there was but one way of getting his head above water, and that was to yield to his father's wishes and contract a real marriage with a foreign princess. Fate was dogging his footsteps relentlessly. Placed as he was, George could not but offer to marry as his father willed. It is well, also, to remember that George was not ruthlessly and suddenly turning his shoulder upon Mrs. Fitzherbert. For some time before the British plenipotentiary went to fetch him a bride from over the waters, his name had been associated with that of the beautiful and unscrupulous Countess of Jersey.

Poor George! Half-married to a woman whom he no longer worshipped, compelled to marry a woman whom he was to hate at first sight! Surely we should not judge a prince harshly. "Princess Caroline very *gauche* at cards," "Princess Caroline very *missish* at supper," are among the entries made in his diary by Lord Malmesbury, while he was at the little German court. I can conceive no scene more tragic than that of her presentation to the Prince, as related by the same nobleman. "I, according to the established etiquette," so he writes, "introduced the Princess Caroline to him. She, very properly, in consequence of my saying it was the right mode of proceeding, attempted to kneel to him. He raised her gracefully enough, and embraced her, said barely one word, turned round, retired to a distant part of the apartment, and calling to me, said: 'Harris, I am not well: pray get me a glass of brandy.'" At dinner that evening, in the presence of her betrothed, the Princess was "flippant, rattling, affecting wit." Poor George, I say again! Deportment was his ruling passion, and his bride did not know how to behave. Vulgarity—hard, implacable, German vulgarity—was in everything she did to the very day of her death. The marriage was solemnized on Wednesday, April 8th, 1795, and the royal bridegroom was drunk.

So soon as they were separated, George became implected with a morbid hatred for his wife, which was hardly in accord with his light and variant nature and shows how bitterly he had been mortified by his marriage of necessity. It is sad that so much of his life should have been wasted in futile strainings after divorce. Yet we can scarcely blame him for seizing upon every scrap of scandal that was whispered of his wife. Besides his not unnatural wish to be free, it was derogatory to the dignity of a prince and a regent that his wife should be living an eccentric life at Blackheath with a family of singers named Sapio. In-

deed, Caroline's conduct during this time was as indiscreet as ever. Wherever she went she made ribald jokes about her husband, "in such a voice that all, by-standing, might hear." "After dinner," writes one of her servants, "Her Royal Highness made a wax figure as usual, and gave it an amiable pair of large horns; then took three pins out of her garment and stuck them through and through, and put the figure to roast and melt at the fire. What a silly piece of spite! Yet it is impossible not to laugh when one sees it done." Imagine the feelings of the First Gentleman in Europe when the unseemly story of these pranks was whispered to him!

For my own part, I fancy Caroline was innocent of any infidelity to her unhappy husband. But that is neither here nor there. Her behaviour was certainly not above suspicion. It fully justified George in trying to establish a case for her divorce. When, at length, she went abroad, her vagaries were such that the whole of her English suite left her, and we hear of her travelling about the Holy Land attended by another family, named Bergami. When her husband succeeded to the throne, and her name was struck out of the liturgy, she despatched expostulations in absurd English to Lord Liverpool. Receiving no answer, she decided to return and claim her right to be crowned Queen of England. Whatever the unhappy lady did, she always was ridiculous. One cannot but smile as one reads of her posting along the French roads in a yellow travelling-chariot drawn by cart-horses, with a retinue that included an alderman, a reclaimed lady-in-waiting, an Italian count, the eldest son of the alderman, and "a fine little female child, about three years old, whom Her Majesty, in conformity with her benevolent practices on former occasions, had adopted." The breakdown of her impeachment, and her acceptance of an income, formed a fitting anti-climax to the terrible absurdities of her position. She died from the effects of a chill caught when she was trying vainly to force a way to her husband's coronation. Unhappy woman! Our sympathy for her is not misgiven. Fate wrote her a most tremendous tragedy, and she played it in tights. Let us pity her, but not forget to pity her husband, the King, also.

It is another common accusation against George that he was an undutiful and unfeeling son. If this was so, it is certain that not all the blame is to be laid upon him alone. There is more than one anecdote which shows that King George disliked his eldest son, and took no trouble to conceal his dislike, long before the boy had been freed from his tutors. It was the coldness of his father and the petty restrictions he loved to enforce that first drove George to seek the companionship of such men as *Égalité* and the Duke of Cumberland, both of whom were quick to inflame his impressionable mind to angry

resentment. Yet, when Margaret Nicholson attempted the life of the King, the Prince immediately posted off from Brighton that he might wait upon his father at Windsor—a graceful act of piety that was rewarded by his father's refusal to see him. Hated by the Queen, who at this time did all she could to keep her husband and his son apart, surrounded by intriguers, who did all they could to set him against his father, George seems to have behaved with great discretion. In the years that follow, I can conceive no position more difficult than that in which he found himself every time his father relapsed into lunacy. That he should have by every means opposed those who through jealousy stood between him and the regency was only natural. It cannot be said that at any time did he show anxiety to rule, so long as there was any immediate chance of the King's recovery. On the contrary, all impartial seers of that chaotic Court agreed that the Prince bore himself throughout the intrigues, wherein he himself was bound to be, in a notably filial way.

There are many things that I regret in the career of George IV and what I most of all regret is the part that he played in the politics of the period. Englishmen to-day have at length decided that Royalty shall not set foot in the political arena. I do not despair that some day we shall place politics upon a sound commercial basis, as they have already done in America and France, or leave them entirely in the hands of the police, as they do in Russia. It is horrible to think that, under our existing *régime*, all the men of noblest blood and highest intellect should waste their time in the sordid atmosphere of the House of Commons, listening for hours to nonentities talking nonsense, or searching enormous volumes to prove that somebody said something some years ago that does not quite tally with something he said the other day, or stand tremulous before the whips in the lobbies and the scorpions in the constituencies. In the political machine are crushed and lost all our best men. That Mr. Gladstone did not choose to be a cardinal is a blow under which the Roman Catholic Church still staggers. In Mr. Chamberlain Scotland Yard missed its smartest detective. What a fine voluptuary might Lord Rosebery have been! It is a platitude that the country is ruled best by the permanent officials, and I look forward to the time when Mr. Keir Hardie shall hang his cap in the hall of No. 10 Downing Street, and a Conservative workingman shall lead Her Majesty's Opposition. In the lifetime of George, politics were not a whit finer than they are to-day. I feel a genuine indignation that he should have wasted so much of tissue in mean intrigues about ministries and bills. That he should have been fascinated by that splendid fellow, Fox, is quite right. That he should have thrown himself

with all his heart into the storm of the Westminster election is most natural. But it is awful in veridicality to find him, long after he had reached man's estate, indulging in back-stair intrigues with Whigs and Tories. It is, of course, absurd to charge him with deserting his first friends, the Whigs. His love and fidelity were given, not to the Whigs, but to the men who led them. Even after the death of Fox, he did, in misplaced piety, do all he could for Fox's party. What wonder that, when he found he was ignored by the Ministry that owed its existence to him, he turned his back upon that sombre couple, the "Lords G. and G.," whom he had always hated, and went over to the Tories? Among the Tories he hoped to find men who would faithfully perform their duties and leave him leisure to live his own beautiful life. I regret immensely that his part in politics did not cease here. The state of the country and of his own finances, and also, I fear, a certain love that he had imbibed for political manipulation, prevented him from standing aside. How useless was all the finesse he displayed in the long-drawn question of Catholic Emancipation! How lamentable his terror of Lord Wellesley's rude dragooning! And is there not something pitiable in the thought of the Regent at a time of ministerial complications lying prone on his bed with a sprained ankle, and taking, as was whispered, in one day as many as seven hundred drops of laudanum? Some said he took these doses to deaden the pain. But others, and among them his brother Cumberland, declared that the sprain was all a sham. I hope it was. The thought of a voluptuary in pain is very terrible. In any case, I cannot but feel angry, for George's own sake and that of his kingdom, that he found it impossible to keep further aloof from the wearisome troubles of political life. His wretched indecision of character made him an easy prey to unscrupulous ministers, while his extraordinary diplomatic powers and almost extravagant tact made them, in their turn, an easy prey to him. In these two processes much of his genius was spent untimely. I must confess that he did not quite realize where his duties ended. He wished always to do too much. If you read his repeated appeals to his father that he might be permitted to serve actively in the British army against the French, you will acknowledge that it was through no fault of his own that he did not fight. It touches me to think that in his declining years he actually thought that he had led one of the charges at Waterloo. He would often describe the whole scene as it appeared to him at that supreme moment, and refer to the Duke of Wellington, saying, "Was it not so, Duke?" "I have often heard you say so, your Majesty," the old soldier would reply, grimly. I am not sure that the old soldier was at Waterloo himself. In a room full of people he once referred to the

battle as having been won upon the playing-fields of Eton. This was certainly a most unfortunate slip, seeing that all historians are agreed that it was fought on a certain field situated a few miles from Brussels.

In one of his letters to the King, craving for a military appointment, George urges that, whilst his next brother, the Duke of York, commanded the army, and the younger branches of the family were either generals or lieutenant-generals, he, who was Prince of Wales, remained colonel of dragoons. And herein, could he have known it, lay the right limitation of his life. As Royalty was and is constituted, it is for the younger sons to take an active part in the services, whilst the eldest son is left as the ruler of Society. Thousands and thousands of guineas were given by the nation that the Prince of Wales, the Regent, the King, might be, in the best sense of the word, ornamental. It is not for us, at this moment, to consider whether Royalty, as a wholly Pagan institution, is not out of place in a community of Christians. It is enough that we should inquire whether the god, whom our grandfathers set up and worshipped and crowned with offerings, gave grace to his worshippers.

That George was a moral man, in our modern sense, I do not for one moment pretend. It were idle to deny that he was profligate. When he died there were found in one of his cabinets more than a hundred locks of women's hair. Some of these were still plastered with powder and pomatum, some were mere little golden curls, such as grow low down upon a girl's neck, others were streaked with grey. The whole of this collection subsequently passed into the hands of Adam, the famous Scotch henchman of the Regent. In his family, now resident in Glasgow, it is treasured as an heirloom. I myself have been privileged to look at all these locks of hair, and I have seen a *clairvoyante* take them one by one, and, pinching them between her lithe fingers, tell of the love that each symbolized. I have heard her tell of long rides by night, of a boudoir hung with grass-green satin, and of a tryst at Windsor; of one, the wife of a hussar at York, whose little lap-dog used to bark angrily whenever the Regent came near his mistress; of a milk-maid who, in her great simpleness, thought her child would one day be King of England; of an arch-duchess with blue eyes, and a silly little flautist from Portugal; of women that were wantons and fought for his favour, great ladies that he loved dearly, girls that gave themselves to him humbly. If we lay all pleasures at the feet of our Prince, we can scarcely hope he will remain virtuous. Indeed, we do not wish our Prince to be an exemplar of godliness, but a perfect type of happiness. It may be foolish of us to insist upon apolaustic happiness, but that is the kind of happiness that we can ourselves, most of us, best under-

stand, and so we offer it to our ideal. In Royalty we find our Bacchus, our Venus.

Certainly George was, in the practical sense of the word, a fine king. His wonderful physique, his wealth, his brilliant talents, he gave them all without stint to society. From the time when, at Madame Cornelys', he gallivanted with rips and demireps, to the time when he sat, a stout and solitary old king, fishing in the artificial pond at Windsor, his life was beautifully ordered. He indulged to the full in all the delights that England could offer him. That he should have, in his old age, suddenly abandoned his career of vigorous enjoyment is, I confess, rather surprising. The Royal voluptuary generally remains young to the last. No one ever tires of pleasure. It is the pursuit of pleasure, the trouble to grasp it, that makes us old. Only the soldiers who enter Capua with wounded feet leave it demoralized. And yet George, who never had to wait or fight for a pleasure, fell enervate long before his death. I can but attribute this to the constant persecution to which he was subjected by duns and ministers, parents and wives.

Not that I regret the manner in which he spent his last years. On the contrary, I think it was exceedingly cosy. I like to think of the King, at Windsor, lying a-bed all the morning in his darkened room, with all the sporting papers scattered over his quilt and a little decanter of the favourite cherry-brandy within easy reach. I like to think of him sitting by his fire in the afternoon and hearing his ministers ask for him at the door and piling another log upon the fire, as he heard them sent away by his servant. It was not, I acknowledge, a life to kindle popular enthusiasm. But most people knew little of its mode. For all they knew, His Majesty might have been making his soul or writing his memoirs. In reality, George was now "too fat by far" to brook the observation of casual eyes. Especially he hated to be seen by those whose memories might bear them back to the time when he had yet a waist. Among his elaborate precautions of privacy was a pair of *avant-couriers*, who always preceded his pony-chaise in its daily progress through Windsor Great Park and had strict commands to drive back any intruder. In *The Veiled Majestic Man, Where is the Graceful Despot of England?* and other lampoons not extant, the scribblers mocked his loneliness. At White's one evening, four gentlemen of high fashion vowed, over their wine, they would see the invisible monarch. So they rode down next day to Windsor, and secreted themselves in the branches of a holm-oak. Here they waited *perdus*, beguiling the hours and the frost with their flasks. When dusk was falling, they heard at last the chime of hoofs on the hard road, and saw presently a splash of the Royal livery, as two grooms trotted by, peering warily from side to side, and dis-

appeared in the gloom. The conspirators in the tree held their breath, till they caught the distant sound of wheels. Nearer and louder came the sound, and soon they saw a white, postillioned pony, a chaise and yes, girth immensurate among the cushions, a weary monarch, whose face, crimson above the dark accumulation of his stock, was like some ominous sunset. . . . He had passed them and they had seen him, monstrous and moribund among the cushions. He had been borne past them like a wounded Bacchanal. The King! The Regent! . . . They shuddered in the frosty branches. The night was gathering and they climbed silently to the ground, with an awful, indispellible image before their eyes.

You see, these gentlemen were not philosophers. Remember, also, that the strangeness of their escapade, the cramped attitude they had been compelled to maintain in the branches of the holm-oak, the intense cold and their frequent resort to the flask must have all conspired to exaggerate their emotions and prevent them from looking at things in a rational way. After all, George had lived his life. He had lived more fully than any other man. And it was better really that his death should be preceded by decline. For every one, obviously, the most *desirable* kind of death is that which strikes men down, suddenly, in their prime. Had they not been so dangerous, railways would never have ousted the old coaches from popular favour. But, however keenly we may court such a death for ourselves or for those who are near and dear to us, we must always be offended whenever it befall one in whom our interest is æsthetic merely. Had his father permitted George to fight at Waterloo, and had some fatal bullet pierced the padding of that splendid breast, I should have been really annoyed, and this essay would never have been written. Sudden death mars the unity of an admirable life. Natural decline, tapering to tranquillity, is its proper end. As a man's life begins, faintly, and gives no token of childhood's intensity and the expansion of youth and the perfection of manhood, so it should also end, faintly. The King died a death that was like the calm conclusion of a great, lurid poem. *Quievit.*

Yes, his life was a poem, a poem in the praise of Pleasure. And it is right that we should think of him always as the great voluptuary. Only let us note that his nature never became, as do the natures of most voluptuaries, corroded by a cruel indifference to the happiness of others. When all the town was agog for the *fête* to be given by the Regent in honour of the French King, Sheridan sent a forged card of invitation to Romeo Coates, the half-witted dandy, who used at this time to walk about in absurd ribbons and buckles, and was the butt of all the streetsters. The poor fellow arrived at the entrance of Carlton House,

proud as a peacock, and he was greeted with a tremendous cheer from the by-standing mob, but when he came to the lackeys he was told that his card was a hoax and sent about his business. The tears were rolling down his cheeks as he shambled back into the street. The Regent heard later in the evening of this sorry joke, and next day despatched a kindly-worded message, in which he prayed that Mr. Coates would not refuse to come and "view the decorations, nevertheless." Though he does not appear to have treated his inferiors with the extreme servility that is now in vogue, George was beloved by the whole of his household, and many are the little tales that are told to illustrate the kindness and consideration he showed to his valets and his jockeys and his stable-boys. That from time to time he dropped certain of his favourites is no cause for blaming him. Remember that a Great Personage, like a great genius, is dangerous to his fellow-creatures. The favourites of Royalty live in an intoxicant atmosphere. They become unaccountable for their behaviour. Either they get beyond themselves, and, like Brummell, forget that the King, their friend, is also their master, or they outrun the constable and go bankrupt, or cheat at cards in order to keep up their position, or do some other foolish thing that makes it impossible for the King to favour them more. Old friends are generally the refuge of unsociable persons. Remembering this also, gauge the temptation that besets the very leader of Society to form fresh friendships, when all the cleverest and most charming persons in the land are standing ready, like supers at the wings, to come on and please him! At Carlton House there was a constant succession of wits. Minds were preserved for the Prince of Wales, as coverts are preserved for him to-day. For him Sheridan would flash his best *bon-mot*, and Theodore Hook play his most practical joke, his swiftest *chansonette*. And Fox would talk, as only he could, of Liberty and of Patriotism, and Byron would look more than ever like Isidore de Lara as he recited his own bad verses, and Sir Walter Scott would "pour out with an endless generosity his store of old-world learning, kindness, and humour." Of such men George was a splendid patron. He did not merely sit in his chair, gaping princely at their wit and their wisdom, but quoted with the scholars and argued with the statesmen and jested with the wits. Doctor Burney, an impartial observer, says that he was amazed by the knowledge of music that the Regent displayed in a half-hour's discussion over the wine. Croker says that "the Prince and Scott were the two most brilliant story-tellers, in their several ways, he had ever happened to meet. Both exerted themselves, and it was hard to say which shone the most." Indeed His Royal Highness appears to have been a fine conversationalist, with a wide range of knowledge and great humour.



We, who have come at length to look upon stupidity as one of the most sacred prerogatives of Royalty, can scarcely realize that, if George's birth had been never so humble, he would have been known to us as a most admirable scholar and wit, or as a connoisseur of the arts. It is pleasing to think of his love for the Flemish school of painting, for Wilkie and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The splendid portraits of foreign potentates that hang in the Banqueting Room at Windsor bear witness to his sense of the canvas. In his later years he exerted himself strenuously in raising the tone of the drama. His love of the classics never left him. We know he was fond of quoting those incomparable poets, Homer, at great length, and that he was prominent in the "papyrus-craze." Indeed, he inspired Society with a love of something more than mere pleasure, a love of the "humaner delights." He was a giver of tone. At his coming, the bluff, disgusting ways of the Tom and Jerry period gave way to those florid graces that are still called Georgian.

A pity that George's predecessor was not a man, like the Prince Consort, of strong chastening influence! Then might the bright flamboyance which he gave to Society have made his reign more beautiful than any other—a real renaissance. But he found London a wild city of taverns and cock-pits, and the grace which in the course of years he gave to his subjects never really entered into them. The cock-pits were gilded and the taverns painted with colour, but the heart of the city was vulgar, even as before. The simulation of higher things did indeed give the note of a very interesting period, but how shallow that simulation was and how merely it was due to George's own influence, we may see in the light of what happened after his death. The good that he had done died with him. The refinement he had laid upon vulgarity fell away, like enamel from withered cheeks. It was only George himself who had made the sham endure. The Victorian era came soon, and the angels rushed in and drove the nymphs away and hung the land with reps.

I have often wondered whether it was with a feeling that his influence would be no more than life-long, that George allowed Carlton House, that dear structure, the very work of his life and symbol of his being, to be rased. I wish that Carlton House were still standing. I wish we could still walk through those corridors, whose walls were "crusted with ormolu," and parquet-floors were "so glossy that, were Narcissus to come down from heaven, he would, I maintain, need no other mirror for his *beauté*." I wish that we could see the pier-glasses and the girandoles and the twisted sofas, the fauns foisted upon the ceiling and the rident goddesses along the wall. These things would make George's memory dearer to us, help us to a fuller knowledge of him.

I am glad that the Pavilion still stands here in Brighton. Its trite lawns and wanton cupolæ have taught me much. As I write this essay, I can see them from my window. Last night, in a crowd of trippers and townspeople, I roamed the lawns of that dishonoured palace, whilst a band played us tunes. Once I fancied I saw the shade of a swaying figure and of a wine-red face.

*Brighton, 1894.*

# Hitler

JOHN GUNTHER (1901- )

John Gunther is one of the best informed and most skillful of the foreign newspaper and radio correspondents whose books on recent European and Asiatic events have been so widely read in America. Walter Duranty, Vincent Sheean, Negley Farson, Webb Miller, William Chamberlin, and William L. Shirer are others of the same company. Born in Chicago in 1901, John Gunther was educated in the schools of that city and at the University of Chicago. After graduation in 1922, he began at once a newspaper career which has led him over much of the habitable globe as a news-gatherer *par excellence*. Beginning as a reporter on the *Chicago Daily News*, he was soon sent abroad as foreign correspondent, first to London and later to Paris, Moscow, Berlin, Rome, Scandinavia, Geneva, Madrid, and the Near East. He was a Central European and Balkan correspondent from 1930 to 1935. In 1935 and 1936 he was once more in London. He has interviewed at one time or another almost all present and recent political leaders of England and the Continent and has covered such events as the 1926 French war in Syria, the Palestine riots of 1929, the evacuation of the Rhineland in 1930, the Spanish revolution in 1932, Germany's departure from the League of Nations in 1933, and the Austrian civil conflicts of 1934.

He has found time for such ventures in fiction as *The Red Pavilion* (1926), *Eden for One* (1927), and *The Bright Nemesis* (1932). *The High Cost of Hitler* (1939) was a collection of his radio broadcasts from Europe to the United States just before the outbreak of the second World War. But his reputation is based primarily upon two works, *Inside Europe* (1936) and *Inside Asia* (1939). *Inside Europe* has been repeatedly revised and brought up to date, most recently in 1940; it had reached a forty-third printing already in 1938 and has been selling rapidly ever since. Perhaps no other book has done more to inform Americans of the forces and events which have led to the present crisis in world affairs.

The portrait of Hitler here reprinted appeared in its original form in *Harper's Magazine* for January, 1936. As the first chapter of *Inside Europe* it was revised in 1937, 1938, and 1940 with other parts of the text which rapidly changing times had partly invalidated. It would be of interest to trace the changes in Gunther's successive revisions, and it has been suggested that such a "progressive biography," altered as the subject passes through new phases of his life, might give rise to an interesting new biographical type.

Gunther writes in a lucid, economical prose well adapted to his journalistic purposes. In everything he writes the hand of the trained popular

journalist is apparent. He is aware of his audience, careful in organization, explicit; he relies on the clear exposition of the journalist rather than the imaginative suggestiveness of the artist. His portrait of Hitler is the best of the many which have appeared and will probably remain so until an accomplished literary artist avails himself of the testimony at hand and puts the character before us dramatically. Future historians and biographers will be much concerned with the neurotic of Berchtesgaden.

The world moves so rapidly that even this latest revision of Gunther's article necessarily lags behind events. Hess, for example, is no longer in Germany, no longer a possible successor of Hitler. Reports have even suggested the possibility that Goering may be out of favor. The next revision of "Hitler" must take into account the policies pursued in subjected areas and Hitler's part in Germany's military adventures. The article has of course been reprinted as written.

*The union of theorizer, organizer, and leader in one man is the rarest phenomenon on earth, therein lies greatness.*—ADOLF HITLER

ADOLF HITLER, IRRATIONAL, CONTRADICTORY, COMPLEX, is an unpredictable character; therein lie his power and his menace. To millions of honest Germans he is sublime, a figure of adoration; he fills them with love, fear, and nationalist ecstasy. To many other Germans he is meager and ridiculous—a charlatan, a lucky hysteric, and a lying demagogue. What are the reasons for this paradox? What are the sources of his extraordinary power?

This paunchy, Charlie-Chaplin-mustached man, given to insomnia and emotionalism, who is the head of the Nazi party, commander-in-chief of the German army and navy, Leader of the German nation, creator, President, and chancellor of the Third Reich, was born in Austria in 1889. He was not a German by birth. This was a highly important point inflaming his early nationalism. He developed the implacable patriotism of the frontiersman, the exile. Only an Austrian could take Germanism so seriously.

The inside story of Hitler includes many extraordinary and bizarre episodes. Before discussing his birth and childhood and outlining his career, it may be well to present a broad detailed picture of his character and his daily routine and his attitudes and habits, his personal characteristics and limitations.

### HITLER THE HUMAN BEING

His imagination is purely political. I have seen his early paintings, those which he submitted to the Vienna art academy as a boy. They

From *Inside Europe*, by John Gunther, published by Harper and Brothers. Copyright 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1940, by John Gunther.

are prosaic, utterly devoid of rhythm, color, feeling, or spiritual imagination. They are architect's sketches: painful and precise draftsmanship; nothing more. No wonder the Vienna professors told him to go to an architectural school and give up pure art as hopeless. Yet he still wants deeply to be an artist. In 1939, during the crisis leading to the Polish war, he told Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador, that his only ambition was to retire to the Berchtesgaden hills and paint.

He went only to elementary school, and by no stretch of generosity could he be called a person of genuine culture. He is not nearly so cultivated, so sophisticatedly interested in intellectual affairs as is, say, Mussolini. He reads almost nothing. The Treaty of Versailles was, probably, the most concrete single influence on his life; but it is doubtful if he ever read it in full. He dislikes intellectuals. He has never been outside Germany since his youth in Austria (if you except his War experiences in Flanders and two brief visits to Mussolini) and he speaks no foreign language, except a few words of French.

To many who meet him, Hitler seems awkward and ill at ease. This is because visitors, even among his subordinates, obtrude personal realities which interfere with his incessant fantasies. He has no poise. He finds it difficult to make quick decisions: capacity for quick decisions derives from inner harmony, which he lacks. He is no "strong, silent man."

Foreigners, especially interviewers from British or American papers, may find him cordial and even candid but they seldom have opportunity to question him, to participate in a give-and-take discussion. Hitler rants. He orates. He is extremely emotional.<sup>1</sup> He seldom answers questions. He talks to you as if you were a public meeting, and nothing can stop the gush of words.

Years ago, before signing his short-lived friendship pact with Poland, he received a well-known American publicist and editor. He did ask a question: What the American would think if, for example, Mexico were Poland and Texas were cut off from the United States by a "corridor" in Mexico. The American replied, "The answer to that is that Canada is not France." Hitler had intended the question rhetorically, and he was so shocked and upset by the little interruption that it took him some time to get in full voice again—on another point.

For a time it was said commonly that Hitler's best trait was loyalty. He would never, the sardonic joke put it, give up three things: the Jews, his friends, and Austria. Nobody would make that joke to-day, now that Captain Roehm is dead. Nor would anyone of knowledge and

<sup>1</sup> He told one astonished group of interviewers that they could "crucify" him if he did not keep his promises.

discernment have made it even before June 30, 1934, because the scroll of Hitler's disloyalties was written in giant words.

One after another he eliminated those who helped him to his career: Drexler, Feder, Gregor Strasser. It is true that he has been loyal to some colleagues—those who never disagreed with him, who gave him absolute obedience. This loyalty is not an unmixed virtue, considering the unsavoriness of such men as Streicher, the Nuremberg Jew-baiter. Nothing can persuade Hitler to give up Streicher and some other comrades. Unsavoriness alone is not enough to provoke his Draconian ingratitude.

His physical courage is doubtful. When his men were fired on in the Munich *Putsch* of 1923, he flung himself to the street with such violence that his shoulder was broken. Nazi explanations of this are two: (1) linked arm in arm with a man on his right who was shot and killed, he was jerked unwittingly to the pavement; (2) he behaved with the reflex action of the veteran front-line soldier, viz., sensibly fell flat when the bullets came.

Hitler has told an acquaintance his own story of the somewhat mysterious circumstances in which he won the Iron Cross. He was a dispatch-bearer. He was carrying messages across a part of No-Man's-Land which was believed to be clear of enemy troops, when he heard French voices. He was alone, armed only with a revolver; so with great presence of mind he shouted imaginary orders to an imaginary column of men. The Frenchmen tumbled out of a deserted dugout, seven in all, hands up. Hitler alone delivered all seven to the German lines. Recounting this story privately, he told his interlocutor that he knew the feat would have been impossible, had the seven men been American or English instead of French.<sup>2</sup>

Like that of all fanatics, his capacity for self-belief, his ability to delude himself, is enormous. Thus he is quite "sincere"—he really believes it—when in a preposterous interview with the *Daily Mail* [London] he says that the Nazi revolution cost only twenty-six lives. He believes absolutely in what he says—at the moment.

But his lies have been notorious. Heiden<sup>3</sup> mentions some of the more recondite untruths, and others are known to every student. Hitler promised the authorities of Bavaria not to make a *Putsch*; and promptly made one. He promised to tolerate the Papen government; then fought it. He promised not to change the composition of his first cabinet; then

<sup>2</sup> This story is not the official version, which is more grandiloquent. Some mystery attaches to the exact circumstances. Cf. *Heli*, a bright anonymous British book about Germany, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *History of National Socialism*, by Konrad Heiden, a book indispensable for the study of the new Germany.

changed it. He promised to kill himself if the Munich *coup* failed; it failed, and he is still alive.

### THE MAN WITHOUT HABITS

Hitler, nearing fifty-one, is not in first-rate physical condition. He has gained about twelve pounds in the past few years, and his neck and midriff show it. His physical presence has always been indifferent; the sloppiness with which he salutes is, for instance, notorious. The forearm barely moves above the elbow. He had lung trouble as a boy, and was blinded by poison gas in the War.

In August, 1935, it was suddenly revealed that the Leader had suffered a minor operation some months before to remove a polyp on his vocal cords—penalty of years of tub-thumping. The operation was successful. The next month Hitler shocked his adherents at Nuremberg by alluding, in emotional and circumlocutory terms, to the possibility of his death. "I do not know when I shall finally close my eyes," he said, "but I do know that the party will continue and will rule. Leaders will come and Leaders will die, but Germany will live. . . . The army must preserve the power given to Germany and watch over it." The speech led to rumors (quite unconfirmed) that the growth in Hitler's throat was malignant, and that he had cancer.

Nowadays Hitler broods and talks about death a good deal. One reason for his prodigious expansionist efforts in 1938 and 1939 was fear of death before his work was complete.

He takes no exercise, and his only important relaxation—though lately he began to like battleship cruises in the Baltic or North Sea—is music. He is deeply musical. Wagner is one of the cardinal influences on his life; he is obsessed by Wagner. He goes to opera as often as he can, and he was attending the Bayreuth Festival when, on July 25, 1934, Nazi putschists murdered Chancellor Dollfuss in Austria. Sessions of the Reichstag, which take place in the Kroll Opera House, sometimes end with whole performances of Wagner operas—to the boredom of non-musical deputies!

When fatigued at night in the old days, his friend and court jester Hanfstaengl was sometimes summoned to play him to sleep, occasionally with Schumann or Verdi, more often with Beethoven and Wagner, for Hitler needs music like dope. Hanfstaengl is a demoniac pianist. I have heard him thump the keys at the Kaiserhof with such resonance that the walls shook. When Hanfstaengl plays, he keeps time to his own music by puffing out his cheeks and bellowing like a trumpet. The effect is amazing. You cannot but believe that a trumpeter is hidden somewhere in the room.

Hitler cares nothing for books; nothing for clothes (he seldom wears anything but an ordinary brown-shirt uniform, or a double-breasted blue serge suit, with the inevitable raincoat and slouch hat); very little for friends; and nothing for food and drink. He neither smokes nor drinks, and he will not allow anyone to smoke near him. He is practically a vegetarian. At the banquet tendered him by Mussolini he would eat only a double portion of scrambled eggs. He drinks coffee occasionally, but not often. Once or twice a week he crosses from the Chancellery to the Kaiserhof Hotel (the G. H. Q. of the Nazi party before he came to power), and sits there and sips—chocolate.

This has led many people to speak of Hitler's "asceticism" but asceticism is not quite the proper word. He is limited in aesthetic interests, but he is no flagellant or anchorite. There is very little of the *austere* in Hitler. He eats only vegetables—but they are prepared by an exquisitely competent chef. He lives "simply"—but his house in Berchtesgaden is the last word in modern sumptuousness.

He works, when in Berlin, in the palace of the *Reichskanzler* on the Wilhelmstrasse. He seldom uses the president's palace a hundred yards away on the same street, because when Hindenburg died he wanted to eliminate as much as possible the memory of Presidential Germany. The building is new, furnished in modern glass and metal, and Hitler helped design it. Murals of the life of Wotan adorn the walls. An improvised balcony has been built over the street, from which, on public occasions, the Leader may review his men. Beneath the hall—according to reports—is a comfortable bomb-proof cellar.

Hitler dislikes Berlin. He leaves the capital at any opportunity, preferring Munich or Berchtesgaden, a village in southern Bavaria, where he has an alpine establishment, Haus Wachenfeld. Perched on the side of a mountain, this retreat, dear to his heart, is not far from the former Austrian frontier, a psychological fact of great significance. From his front porch he could almost see the homeland which repudiated him, and for which he yearned for many years.

Above the Berchtesgaden house—where he came in 1938 and 1939 to spend more and more time, often neglecting Berlin for weeks on end—is an amazing lookout or aerie his engineers have built on a mountain top, near Kehlstein. A special, heavily guarded, looping road leads to bronze gates cut into a sheer wall of rock; inside the solid mountain, an elevator shaft rises four hundred feet. Here, on top, is a large circular room walled with windows. And here, when he really wants to be alone, Hitler comes.

Another peculiar point about Hitler is his passionate interest in



astrology. It is widely believed that he set the date for the Sudeten crisis by advice of astrologers.

### FRIENDS

By a man's friends may ye know him. But Hitler has very few.

For years his most intimate associate, beyond all doubt, was Capt. Ernst Roehm, chief of staff of the SA (*Sturm Abteilung*—storm troops—Brown Shirts), who was executed on June 30, 1934. From one of the half dozen men in Germany indisputably most qualified to know, I have heard that Roehm was the *only* man in Germany, the single German out of 65,000,000 Germans, with whom Hitler was on *Du-Fuss* (thee and thou) terms. Now that Roehm is dead, there is no single German who calls Hitler "Adolf." Roehm was a notorious homosexual, but one should not deduce from this that Hitler is homosexual also.

The man who is probably closest to Hitler since Roehm's death is his chief bodyguard, Lieut. Brückner. Another close associate is Max Amman, who was his top sergeant in the Great War. For a time his former captain, Fritz Weidemann, now German consul-general in San Francisco, was also close. Politically his most intimate adviser is certainly the foreign minister, Herr von Ribbentrop, who is one of the very few people who can see him at any time, without previous arrangement. He is bewitched by Ribbentrop's "wisdom." His chief permanent officials, like Dietrich, his Press secretary, may see him daily, and so may Hess, the deputy leader of the party; but even Hess is not an *intimate* friend. Neither Goering nor Goebbels may, as a rule, see Hitler without appointment.

He is almost oblivious of ordinary personal contacts. A colleague of mine traveled with him, in the same airplane, day after day, for two months during the 1932 electoral campaigns. Hitler never talked to a soul, not even to his secretaries, in the long hours in the air; never stirred; never smiled. My friend remembers most vividly that, in order to sneak a cigarette when the plane stopped, he had to run out of sight of the *entourage*. He says that he saw Hitler a steady five or six hours a day during his trip, but that he is perfectly sure Hitler, meeting him by chance outside the airplane, would not have known his name or face.

He dams profession of emotion to the bursting point, then is apt to break out in crying fits. A torrent of feminine tears compensates for the months of uneasy struggle not to give himself away. For instance, when he spent a whole night trying to persuade a dissident leader, Otto Strasser, from leaving the party, he broke into tears three times. In the early days he often wept, when other methods to carry a point failed.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Compare with Stalin, for instance. Can one imagine Stalin bawling after a hard day, or summoning a comrade to play him music?

Hitler does not enjoy too great exposure of this weakness, and he tends to keep all subordinates at a distance. They worship him; but they do not know him well. They may see him every day, year in year out; but they would never dare to be familiar. Hanfstaengl told me once that in all the years of their association he had never called Hitler anything except "Herr Hitler" or "Herr Reichskanzler" after the Leader reached power, and that Hitler had never called him by first name or his diminutive (Putzi), but always "Hanfstaengl" or "Dr. Hanfstaengl." There is an inhumanity about the inner circle of the Nazi party that is scarcely credible.

An old-time party member, to-day, would address Hitler as "*Mein Führer*"; others as "Herr Reichskanzler." When greeted with the Nazi salute and the words "Heil Hitler," Hitler himself replies with "Heil Hitler." Speechmaking, the Leader addresses his followers as "My" German people. In posters for the plebiscites he asks, "Dost thou, German man, and thou, German woman—etc." It is as if he feels closer to the German people in bulk than to any individual German, and this is indeed true. The German *people* are the chief emotional reality of his life.

Let us, now, examine Hitler's relation to the imperatives which dominate the lives of most men.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD WOMEN

He is totally uninterested in women from any personal sexual point of view. He thinks of them as housewives and mothers or potential mothers, to provide sons for the battlefield—other people's sons.

"The life of our people must be freed from the asphyxiating perfume of modern eroticism," he says in *Mein Kampf*, his autobiography.<sup>5</sup> His personal life embodies this precept to the fullest. He is not a woman-hater, but he avoids and evades women. His manners are those of the wary chevalier, given to hand-kissing—and nothing else. Many women are attracted to him sexually, but they have had to give up the chase. Frau Goebbels formerly had evening parties to which she asked pretty and distinguished women to meet him, but she was never able to arrange a match.<sup>6</sup> Occasional rumors of the engagement of the coy Leader to various ladies are nonsense. It is quite possible that Hitler has never had anything to do with a woman in his life.

Occasionally young English or American girls, ardent Aryans, come to see him, and sometimes they are received, like Miss Unity Mitford.

<sup>5</sup> Most of my quotations from *Mein Kampf* are from the English edition. (Hurst & Blackett, Ltd., 1933.)

<sup>6</sup> Frau Goebbels herself, before she married the propaganda minister, had designs on Hitler, it is said, but she gave up early.

But Hitler does little but harangue them. At the top of his voice he screeches politics, and after a time subsides, limp and exhausted. Even these occasions are not *tête-à-tête*. For Hitler is very fond of the little daughter of Dr. Goebbels, and, fantastic as it may seem, she is often in the room, sometimes on the Leader's knee.

Nor, as is so widely believed, is he homosexual. Several German journalists spent much time and energy, when such an investigation was possible, checking every lodging that Hitler, in Munich days, had slept in; they interviewed beer-hall proprietors, coffee-house waiters, landladies, porters. No evidence was discovered that Hitler had been intimate with anybody of any sex at any time. His sexual energies, at the beginning of his career, were obviously sublimated into oratory. The influence of his mother and childhood environment . . . contributed signally to his frustration. Most of those German writers and observers best equipped to know think that Hitler is a virgin.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD MONEY

Hitler has no use for money personally and therefore very little interest in it, except for political purposes. He has virtually no financial sophistication; his lack of knowledge of even the practical details of finance, as of economics, is profound.

Nowadays what would he need money for? The state furnishes him with servants, residences, motor-cars. One of his last personal purchases was a new raincoat for the visit to Mussolini in June, 1934. Incidentally, members of his staff got into trouble over this, because on their advice he carried only civilian clothes; when he stepped from his airplane and saw Mussolini and all the Italians in uniform, he was ashamed of his mufti nakedness; and even suspected his advisers of purposely embarrassing him.

Hitler takes no salary from the state; rather he donates it to a fund which supports workmen who have suffered from labor accidents; but his private fortune could be considerable, if he chose to save. He announced late in 1935 that he—alone among statesmen—had no bank account or stocks or shares. Previous to this, it had been thought that he was part-owner of Franz Eher & Co., Munich, the publishers of the chief Nazi organs, *Völkischer Beobachter*, *Angriff*, etc., one of the biggest publishing houses in Europe. Its director, Max Amman, Hitler's former sergeant, was for many years his business manager.

If Hitler has no personal fortune, he must have turned all his earnings from his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, to the party. This book is obligatory reading for Germans and, at a high price (RM 7.20 or about \$3.00), it has sold 5,200,000 copies since its publication in 1925, now

being in its 494th edition. If his royalty is fifteen per cent, a moderate estimate, Hitler's total proceeds from this source at the end of 1939 should have been at least \$3,000,000.

Nothing is more difficult in Europe than discovering the facts of the private fortunes of leading men. It is sacrosanct and thus forbidden ground to questioners in all countries. . . . Does any dictator, Hitler or Mussolini or Stalin, carry cash in his pocket, or make actual purchases in cash? It is unlikely.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD RELIGION

Hitler was born and brought up a Roman Catholic. But he lost faith early and he attends no religious services of any kind. His Catholicism means nothing to him; he is impervious even to the solace of confession. On being formed his government almost immediately began a fierce religious war against Catholics, Protestants, and Jews alike.

Why? Perhaps the reason was not religion fundamentally, but politics. To Hitler the overwhelming first business of the Nazi revolution was the "unification," the *Gleichschaltung* (coördination) of Germany. He had one driving passion, the removal from the Reich of any competition, of whatever kind. The Vatican, like Judaism, was a profoundly international (thus non-German) organism. Therefore—out with it.

The basis of much of the early domestic madness of Hitlerism was his incredibly severe and drastic desire to purge Germany of non-German elements, to create a hundred per cent Germany for one hundred per cent Germans only. He disliked bankers and department stores—as Dorothy Thompson pointed out—because they represented non-German, international, financial and commercial forces. He detested socialists and communists because they were affiliated with world groups aiming to internationalize labor. He loathed, above all, pacifists, because pacifists, opposing war, were internationalists.

Catholicism he considered a particularly dangerous competitive force, because it demands two allegiances of a man, and double allegiance was something Hitler could not countenance. Thus the campaign against the "black moles," as Nazis call priests. Several times German relations with the Vatican have neared the breaking point. Protestantism was—theoretically—a simpler matter to deal with, because the Lutheran Church presumably was German and nationalist. Hitler thought that by the simple installation of an army chaplain, a ferocious Nazi named Mueller, as Reichsbishop, he could "coördinate" the Evangelical Church in Germany, and turn it to his service. The idea of a united Protestant Church appealed to his neat architect's mind. He was wrong. The

church question has been an itching pot of trouble ever since. All through 1937 and 1938 it raged.

It was quite natural, following the confused failure to Nazify Protestantism, that some of Hitler's followers should have turned to Paganism. The Norse myths are a first-class nationalist substitute. Carried to its logical extreme, Nazism in fact demands the creation of a new and nationalist religion. Hitler indicated this in a speech at Nuremberg in September, 1935. "Christianity," he said, "succeeded for a time in uniting the old Teutonic tribes, but the Reformation destroyed this unity. Germany is now a united nation. National Socialism has succeeded where Christianity failed." And Heiden has quoted Hitler's remark, "We do not want any other God than Germany itself." This is a vital point. *Germany* is Hitler's religion.<sup>7</sup>

One of Hitler's grudges against God is the fact that Jesus was a Jew. He can't forgive either Christians or Jews for this. And many Nazis *deny* that Jesus was Jewish. Another grudge is nationalist in origin. The basis of the Nazi revolution was the defeat of Germany in the War. Thus religion had to be Nazified because no God who permitted the French and other "inferior" races to win the War could be a satisfactory God for Germany.

Hitler's attempt to unify religion in Germany may lead to one danger. He himself may become a god. And divinity entails difficulties. Gods have to perform miracles.

Vividly in *Mein Kampf* Hitler tells the story of his first encounter with a Jew. He was a boy of seventeen, alone in Vienna, and he had never seen a Jew in his life. The Jew, a visitor from Poland or the Ukraine, in native costume, outraged the tender susceptibilities of the youthful Hitler.

"Can this creature be a Jew?" he asked himself. Then, bursting on him, came a second question: "Can he possibly be a *German*?"

This early experience had a profound influence on him, forming the emotional base of his perfervid anti-Semitism. He was provincially mortified that any such creature could be one with himself, a sharer in German nationality. Later he "rationalized" his fury on economic and political grounds. Jews, he said, took jobs away from "Germans"; Jews controlled the Press of Berlin, the theater, the arts; there were too many Jewish lawyers, doctors, professors; the Jews were a "pestilence, worse than the Black Death."

No one can properly conceive the basic depth and breadth of Hitler's anti-Semitism who has not carefully read *Mein Kampf*. This book was

<sup>7</sup> In 1937 a special prayer was chanted over all German radio stations calling Hitler "God's revelation to the German people" and their "redeemer."

written almost fifteen years ago. He has changed it as edition followed edition, in minor particulars, but in all editions his anti-Jewish prejudice remains implacable.

Long before he became chancellor, Hitler would not allow himself to speak to a Jew even on the telephone. A publicist as well known as Walter Lippmann, a statesman as eminent as Lord Reading, would not be received at the Brown House. An interesting point arises. Has Hitler, in maturity, actually ever been in the company of a Jew, ever once talked to one? Possibly not.

“AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER?”

Extreme precautions are, naturally, taken to guard Hitler against assassination. When he rides out in Berlin, he travels in a Mercedes-Benz as big as a locomotive. Lieut. Brückner, his chief aide, usually sits beside him. Other bodyguards follow in another car, or in several cars. The principal chauffeur is named Schaub, who was an early comrade. SS men with rifles may stand on the running-boards. If the occasion is ceremonial and large crowds are present, the route is lined with SS men (black shirts) alternately facing inward and outward.

Brückner is of great importance politically because he serves to block Hitler off from normal contacts. The complaint frequently is heard that Hitler is badly informed on even vital matters, because Brückner so isolates him from wide acquaintance; even advisers with the best intentions may have little chance of seeing him.

Not long ago Hitler broke his new rule against social affairs by visiting informally a diplomat and his wife who had been useful to him in earlier days. The diplomat talked to Hitler frankly and told him some honest truths. Hitler was upset. Then, the story says, Brückner descended on the diplomat, warning him under no circumstances to dare talk frankly to Hitler again.

For years there was no authentic evidence of any attempt on Hitler's life. Rumors, however, dealt in several. On June 17, 1934, a fortnight before the June 30 clean-up, shots are supposed to have been fired at Hitler's car as he was returning from the burial in German soil of Goering's first wife. In the autumn of 1934 an SS bodyguard was allegedly shot in the finger in the Hotel Kaiserhof, by a bullet meant for Hitler. In March, 1937, General Goering surprised listeners by a veiled reference to possible dangers to Hitler and threats against a possible assassin. Then in November, 1939, came the unsuccessful bomb attempt in the Munich beer hall. Several people were killed; Hitler escaped by eleven minutes.

Insurance rates on his life are quoted in London. A man with im-

portant business in Germany, which might be ruined by the terror and revolution which would very likely follow Hitler's assassination, paid \$52.50 per month for each \$1,000 of insurance against Hitler's death.<sup>8</sup>

#### PERSONAL SOURCES OF POWER

Now we may proceed to summarize Hitler's very considerable positive qualities.

First, consider his single-mindedness, his intent fixity of purpose. His tactics may change; his strategy may change; his *aim*, never. His aim is to create a strong national Germany, with himself atop it. No opportunistic device, no zigzag in polemics, is too great for him; but the aim, the goal, never varies.

Associated with his single-mindedness is the quality of stamina. All dictators have stamina; all need it. Despite Hitler's flabbiness and lack of vigorous gesture, his physical endurance is considerable. I know interviewers who have talked to him on the eve of an election, after he has made several speeches a day, all over Germany, week on end; they found him fresh and even calm. "When I have a mission to fulfill, I will have the strength for it," he said.

Unlike most dictators, he has no great capacity for hard work, for industry; he is not the sloghorse for punishment that, for instance, Stalin is. He is not a good executive; his desk is usually high with documents requiring his decision, which he neglects. He hates to make up his mind. His orders are often vague and contradictory.

Yet he gets a good deal of work done. "Industry" in a dictator or head of a state means, as a rule, ability to read and listen. The major part of the work of Hitler or Mussolini is perusal of reports and attention to the advice of experts and subordinates. Half their working time they are receiving information. Therefore it is necessary for a dictator (a) to choose men intelligently—many of Hitler's best men he inherited from the old civil service, (b) to instill faith in himself in them. Hitler has succeeded in this double task amply. And when his men fail him, he murders them.

Hitler's political sense is highly developed and acute. His calculations are shrewd and penetrating to the smallest detail. For instance, his first three major acts in foreign policy, Germany's departure from the League of Nations, the introduction of conscription, and the occupation of the Rhineland, were all set for Saturday afternoon, to ease the shock to opinion abroad. When he has something unpleasant to explain, the events of June 30 for instance, he usually speaks well after eight P.M.,

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *News Chronicle*, London, May 21, 1935. The charge for similar insurance against Mussolini's assassination was \$20 on \$500 for three months.

so that foreign newspapers can carry only a hurried and perhaps garbled account of his words.

He made good practical use of his anti-Semitism. The Jewish terror was, indeed, an excellent campaign maneuver. The Nazis surged into power in March, 1933, with an immense series of electoral pledges. They promised to end unemployment, rescind the Versailles treaty, regain the Polish corridor, assimilate Austria, abolish department stores, socialize industry, eliminate interest on capital, give the people land. These aims were more easily talked about than achieved. One thing the Nazis could do. One pledge they could redeem—beat the Jews.

Hitler bases most decisions on intuition. Twice, on supreme occasions, it served him well. In the spring of 1932 his most powerful supporters, chiefly Roehm, pressed him to make a *Putsch*. Hitler refused, *feeling* absolute certainty that he could come to power in a legal manner. Again, in the autumn of 1932, after the Nazis had lost heavily in the November elections, a strong section of the party, led by Gregor Strasser, urged him to admit defeat and enter a coalition government on disadvantageous terms. Hitler, with consummate perspicacity, refused. And within three months he reached power such as the maddest of his followers had not dreamed of.

Another source of Hitler's power is his impersonality, as Frances Gunther has pointed out. His vanity is extreme, but in an odd way it is not personal. He has no peacockery. Mussolini must have given autographed photographs to thousands of admirers since 1922. Those which Hitler has bestowed on friends may be counted on the fingers of two hands. His vanity is the more effective because it expresses itself in non-personal terms. He is the vessel, the instrument, of the will of the German people; or so he pretends. Thus his famous statement, after the June 30 murders, that for twenty-four hours he had been the supreme court of Germany.

Heiden says that Hitler's power is based on intellect, and his intellect on logic. This would seem a dubious interpretation because Hitler's mind is not ratiocinative in the least: he is a man of passion, of instinct, not of reason. His "intellect" is that of a chameleon who knows when to change his color; his "logic" that of a panther who is hungry, and thus seeks food. He himself has said proudly that he is a "Somnambulist"—strange giveaway!

His brain is small and vulgar, limited, sly, narrow, suspicious. But behind it is the lamp of passion, and this passion has such quality that it is immediately discernible and recognizable, like a diamond in the sand. The range of his interests is so slight that any sort of stimulus



provokes the identical reflex: music, religion, economics, mean nothing to him except exercise in German nationalism.

Anthony Eden, when he visited Berlin in the spring of 1935, and talked with Hitler seven hours, was quoted as saying that he showed "complete mastery" of foreign affairs. This is, of course, nonsense. Hitler does not know one-tenth as much about foreign affairs as, say, H. R. Knickerbocker, or Vernon Bartlett, or Hamilton Fish Armstrong, or Dorothy Thompson, or Mr. Eden himself. What Eden meant was that Hitler showed unflagging mastery of *his own view* of foreign affairs.

#### DEMOSTHENES IN BROWN SHIRT

Then there is oratory. This is probably the chief external explanation of Hitler's rise. He talked himself to power. The strange thing is that Hitler is a bad speaker. He screeches; his mannerisms are awkward; his voice breaks at every peroration; he never knows when to stop. Goebbels is a far more subtle and accomplished orator. Yet Hitler, whose magnetism across the table is almost nil, can arouse an audience, especially a big audience, to frenzy.

He knows, of course, all the tricks. At one period he was accustomed to mention at great length the things that "We Germans" (*wir*) had, or did not have, or wanted to do, or could not do. The word *wir* drove into the audience with the rhythmic savagery of a pneumatic drill. Then Hitler would pause dramatically. That, he would say, was the whole trouble. In Germany the word *wir* had no meaning; the country was disunited; there was no "we."

Recently Hitler told a French interviewer about an early oratorical trick and triumph, eighteen years ago in a communist stronghold in Bavaria. He was savagely heckled. "At any moment they might have thrown me out of the window, especially when they produced a blind War invalid who began to speak against all the things that are sacred to me. Fortunately I had also been blind as a result of the War. So I said to these people, 'I know what this man feels. I was even more bewildered than he at one moment—but *I* have recovered my sight!'"

Hitler's first followers were converts in the literal sense of the term. They hit the sawdust trail. Hitler might have been Aimée Semple McPherson or Billy Sunday. Men listened to him once and were his for life—for instance, Goebbels, Brückner, Goering, Hess.

#### "RUIN SEIZE THEE, RUTHLESS KING"

Hitler never flinched from the use of terror, and terror played a powerful rôle in the creation of the Nazi state. From the beginning he encouraged terror. The only purely joyous passage in *Mein Kampf* is

the description of his first big mass meeting, in which the newly organized SA pummeled hecklers bloody. The function of the SA was rough-house: first, rough-house with the aim of preserving "order" at public meetings; second, rough-house on the streets, to frighten, terrorize and murder communists.

He gave jobs, big jobs, to confessed and admitted terrorists like Kilinger and Heines. When a communist was murdered at Potempa, in Silesia, in circumstances of peculiarly revolting brutality, Hitler announced publicly his spiritual unity with the murderers. When, in August, 1932, he thought that Hindenburg might appoint him chancellor, he asked for a three-day period during which the SA could run wild on the streets, and thus revenge themselves upon their enemies.

And we shall see presently what happened on the 30th June, 1934. To say nothing of what happened to the Jews in 1938 and 1939.

#### FÜHRER PRINZIP

Hitler's chief contribution to political theory was the *Führer Prinzip* (Leader Principle). This means, briefly, authority from the top down, obedience from the bottom up, the reversal of the democratic theory of government. It was, as Heiden points out, a remarkably successful invention, since almost anybody could join the movement, no matter with what various aims, and yet feel spiritual cohesion through the personality of the leader. The Nazi movement gave wonderful play to diverse instincts and desires.

Then again, Germans love to be ruled. "The most blissful state a German can experience is that of being bossed," a friend of mine put it in Berlin. And Edgar Ansel Mowrer has recorded the shouts of Nazi youngsters on the streets, "We spit at freedom." A German feels undressed unless he is in uniform. The *Führer Prinzip* not only exploited this feeling by transforming the passive character of German docility, German obedience, into an active virtue; it gave expression also to the bipolar nature of obedience: namely, that most men—even Germans—associate with a desire to be governed a hidden will to govern. The *Führer Prinzip* created hundreds, thousands, of sub-*Führers*, little Hitlers, down to the lowest storm-troop leader. It combined dignified submission with opportunity for leadership.

*Mein Kampf*, for all its impersonality, reveals over and over again Hitler's faith in "the man." After race and nation, personality is his main preoccupation. It is easy to see that the *Führer Prinzip* is simply a rationalization of his own ambition; the theory is announced on the implicit understanding that the "man" is Hitler himself. "A majority," he says, "can never be a substitute for the Man."

Another Hitlerite doctrine is, of course, that of race. But Hitler did not invent the concept of Aryanism; he took it over from Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain. Most—if not all—neutral anthropologists think that Hitler's "racist doctrine" is nonsense. They do not believe that "pure" races exist.

#### OPPOSITION

Hitlerism in its first stages was the process of "unifying" Germany. Yet the Nazis struck at Protestants, Catholics, Jews; they mortally affronted the working classes; they could not put any serious program of economic amelioration into effect without offending the industrialists; they alienated, by brutality and terror, the republicans, democrats, socialists, communists.

Hitler has held three major plebiscites so far. One asked vindication of Germany's departure from the League, and he received a 92.3 per cent vote of confidence. The second sought acceptance of his combination of chancellorship and presidency after the death of Hindenburg; the affirmative vote was 38,362,760 out of 43,529,710 ballots cast. The third followed the Rhineland crisis in March, 1936; his vote was no less than ninety-eight per cent. Of course none was a fair vote in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the term. The plebiscite in the Saar gave him ninety per cent but it probably would have been the same under any other chancellor. The last general election in Danzig, where every effort was made to bring out the vote and which was a better indication than the Saar of public feeling on a straight for-or-against-Hitler issue, brought him 139,043 votes out of 234,956—good enough, but not the two-thirds majority he hoped for.

The last reasonably fair German election, on March 5, 1933—even though it took place under the shadow of the Reichstag fire—gave Hitler thirty-seven per cent. I believe in an election to-day he would better this considerably. Even so, the total Marxist (communist-cum-socialist) vote in 1933 was 11,845,000. This number has probably receded, but just the same there is still a large opposition submerged in Germany. What has happened to these millions of hidden voters?

They are terrified. They are hounded by the police and by spies. They vote Yes in plebiscites because they are frightened of their skins. Some few of them have sought cover actually by joining the SA. Most simply swallow their opinions, their feelings, their inward decency—and wait. They are waiting for their Day. But are they an active political force? No.

The reason is that revolution is a profoundly difficult matter in a police state like Germany, Russia, or Fascist Italy. It is almost an

axiom these days that no revolution can succeed until the equipment in arms and ammunition of the revolutionaries is equal or superior to that of the government. And this margin of superiority is transcendently difficult to achieve.

The Nazis, to their own disadvantage, discovered the essential necessity of arms in the Austrian civil war of July, 1934. They neglected to arm their Austrian adherents, out of carelessness or over-confidence; they assumed that once the signal for the revolt was given the Austrian army and police would mutiny and turn over their arms to the Nazis; this did not happen. The army and police of Dr. Dollfuss remained, by and large, loyal. Therefore we had the spectacle of thousands upon thousands of potentially revolutionary Nazis inhibited from any decisive or direct action simply because they did not possess arms. This lesson is cardinal. You cannot fight a machine-gun by saying "Boo" to it.

If the people riot, Hitler can simply shoot them down. He has the *Reichswehr* (regular army) to do this, not merely the SA and SS. The *Reichswehr* (the ranks are mostly peasant boys) might not shoot at a rising in the agrarian districts, but the farmers are the most tractable people in Hitler's Reich. An urban population would get short shrift. But, one may say, no man, not even Hitler, could shoot down tens of thousands of unarmed or roughly armed rebels. The answer to this is that it is not necessary to shoot down tens of thousands. A few hundreds will be enough.

What is more likely to happen than open rebellion is the slow pressure upward of mass discontent, grumbling, and passive resistance, sabotage caused by growing privation, until the *morale* of the government cracks, and the government, panicky, does foolish things. Discontent may corrosively simmer to the top, disorganizing the headship of state, causing new rivalries between sub-leaders, creating fissures between, say, Ribbentrop on the left and Goering on the right, so deep and so unbridgeable that Hitler is powerless to compose the conflict. But there are no signs that this is happening yet. The 1939 war, moreover, served to unify Germany, at least provisionally.

#### SUCCESSION TO THE PURPLE

If Hitler should die to-morrow his successor would certainly be Goering, bitterly as he is disliked and feared by many members of the party. The Leader might himself prefer Hess, his deputy, as successor [Written in 1940 before the flight of Hess to Scotland.—Eds.], but in the rough-and-tumble that might follow his death, Hess would have small chance against such a doughty character as Goering. The

general is the logical choice. Therefore when the Polish campaign began Hitler formally named Goering to the succession, with Hess as second choice. After Hess, the Nazi party is to choose the "strongest" man.

Goering has force, color, ambition; he is a figure of great popular appeal. The quality and quantity of his uniforms are highly attractive to Germans; his marriage may produce a dynasty. What is more important, the army likes him because he stands for the same thing as it stands for: a strong Germany. Moreover, in the SS and remnants of SA, Goering has a considerable armed force behind him. Finally, he has the courage to grab the job, if grabbing is necessary, which it probably won't be.

Goebbels would be impossible as successor to Hitler; he is the cleverest of all the Nazis, but everybody hates him. Frick is important, but too colorless; Ribbentrop too limited; Ley and Darré out of the running as "radicals"; Schacht is of the greatest importance in economics and finance, but impossible as a popular leader. In fact, the only alternative to Goering would seem to be a straight-out *Reichswehr* ministry formed by an army *coup d'état*, such as the one Schleicher might have headed. Or a dark horse.

Rumors, however, to the effect that Goering is *now* actively intriguing against Hitler are nonsense. There are many virtues that Goering lacks, but loyalty is not among them—at least not yet. Besides, Hitler could eliminate Goering to-day almost as easily as he eliminated Roehm. Hitler is all-powerful. Real rivals do not exist. Goering, Goebbels, and all the rest of them, as H. R. Knickerbocker once expressed it, are no more than moons to Hitler's sun. They shine—but only when the sun shines on them.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador in Berlin, stated in October, 1939, that Goering told him, "When a decision has to be taken, none of us counts more than the stones on which we are standing. It is the *Fuhrer* alone who decides."

# Napoleon III

WILLIAM BOLITHO (1890-1930)

When William Bolitho died on June 2, 1930 at his villa near Avignon, he was only thirty-nine years old. But he had lived through several average lifetimes. His real name was William Bolitho Ryall. He was born in Capetown, South Africa, of Dutch-English parents. Here, despite work as a newsboy and day-laborer, he was an honor student. At the outbreak of the war he staked his way to England on a British steamer and joined the army. On the Somme in 1916 Lieutenant Ryall and fifteen others were buried in a mine explosion, and he alone was taken out alive. He spent a year in a hospital in Scotland but never completely recovered. After the war the name of William Bolitho began to appear over brilliant despatches from Europe, first in the *Manchester Guardian*, then in the *New York World*. His fame as a foreign correspondent was almost immediate. "Nobody . . . who writes today for the press," wrote Walter Lippmann in 1924, "has so much sensibility, such a mobile memory, and such a range of interest and expression." Bolitho began the first of two visits to America in September, 1928 and increased his circle of admirers with a regular column opposite the *World* editorial page. On his death, Heywood Broun, a far more famous fellow-columnist, wrote: "There has passed . . . the most brilliant journalist of our time."

The list of Bolitho's books is not long. It includes *Leviathan* (1924) and *Camera Obscura* (1930), both of them collections of newspaper articles, and *Cancer of Europe* (1925), a series of crusading reports on the slums of Glasgow. His two best known books are biographical. *Murder for Profit* (1925) is a study of six internationally infamous dealers in mass-murder. *Twelve against the Gods* (1929) consists of a dozen biographies of "adventurers." The adventurer, according to its preface, is always a lonely outlaw pursuing his individualistic way in defiance of society. Under this banner Bolitho gathers a strange company. Beside Napoleon III stand Alexander the Great, Casanova, Christopher Columbus, Mahomet, Lola Montez, Cagliostro, Charles XII of Sweden, Napoleon I, Lucius Sergius Catiline, Isadora Duncan, and Woodrow Wilson.

In "Napoleon III" biography goes side by side with history; the account of the adventurer's rise to power is inseparable from the analysis of a France that made it possible. The writing is uneven—sometimes refreshingly original, sometimes annoyingly slipshod. But the story has a familiar ring which should arrest the least inquisitive of today's readers.

THE GENEROUS, DEMOCRATIC VIEW OF HISTORY, which still has a following, is summed up nicely by Leo Tolstoi, in his famous description of great men as "tickets of history." By which he meant, that only the billions count. Number and poverty were thought to be the only important virtues of mankind. Nevertheless, though the theological authority for this dogma is clear and respectable (it is a corollary to the beatitudes), it is guaranteed rather by mystical intuition which I do not possess, than by any obvious support of appearances. The curious case that we now can proceed with, would indeed be a trial to true believers in the automatism of history, for here was an individual and an individualist, who plainly altered the history of Europe, and not in a small way, but by deflecting its principal tide or currents until and through our own day. Moreover, according to all his historians, both the few grave ones and the mighty college of wits, he was properly not a great man at all.

But this luckily does not concern us, for we renounced all such secretly moral judgments at the beginning. He was a great adventurer; a beautiful addition to our collection.

Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is said by some to have been the illegitimate son of a Dutch admiral, by others, of a music or dancing master. This is probably polemical romance, to discredit or discount him. His legal status is enough for our more objective purposes; that he was the third son of Louis Bonaparte, brother of the Emperor, and King of Holland, and of his wife Hortense, daughter of Josephine by General Beauharnais. He was therefore an integral organ of that extra-corporeal extension of Napoleon's personality, whose growth and purpose we examined previously. The Emperor soon noticed the possibilities of the little boy, standing as he did to him as both uncle and adoptive grandfather, and once remarked, "Who knows but that the future of my race may not lie in this thoughtful child?"

Louis was born in 1808, so that beyond what pleasure the Emperor could have obtained from seeing him eat bonbons, Louis could not have been of much service to his vicarious appetite for life. Nor could the direct influence have been very important.

His half-brother, Charles Auguste Louis Joseph, afterwards known as the Comte de Morny, was born when Louis was three years old. There is no doubt about the identity of the father of this child of Hortense's, at any rate. He was the Comte de Flahaut, a picturesque peer, himself adulterine, with no less a father than the one-time bishop, Talleyrand himself. Morny will come in later in the story.

After Waterloo, Queen Hortense was exiled to Florence, where she

had a scandalous lawsuit with her husband, the ex-king. From there, with only little Louis of all her children with her, she wandered over Switzerland and Germany, settling down at last in the purchase of the castle of Arenenberg, in the canton of Turgau, looking down on Lake Constance. The boy was now about nine years old. Here he learnt to ride, well; and swim and fence; and received a general skirmishing education. His two tutors, one the son of Lebas, the friend of Robespierre, both ardent adepts of Bonapartism, initiated him into the arcana of that doctrine, in which the philanthropy of the revolution is reconciled with romantic nationalism, or jingoism, and the hatred of kings, with the divine right of plebiscitary emperors. Louis never developed even a rudimentary apparatus of self-criticism. The ideas he was given at this period, he retained until the end of his life. Before he was twelve years old, all of them, particularly his mother, had instilled into him that he was born to succeed his grandfather, to make everyone happy and prosperous under his own absolute rule. The Bonapartes by this time had come to believe themselves in their mission.

At the most impressionable age, Lebas took him on a tour through Italy, along the itinerary of both his grandfather's and Caesar's victories, which ended with a visit to Letizia in her retirement at Rome; which quickened his life purpose to the sort of apostolic fervor you may imagine.

This country, for the most part in the power again of Austria, became the principal field of his life, since he was barred out of France by law. When the 1830 revolution drove out the Bourbons, all the immense clan of Bonapartes, scattered over Europe, undoubtedly began to hope more seriously. But the French, passing them over, adopted the mediocre solution of an Orléans, who could claim only to be related to the legitimate heirs, and to be only tacitly the choice of the people. Nevertheless in spite of the fragility of his logical position, Louis Philippe d'Orléans was in fact the nominee of the only class which matters in a modern state, the bourgeoisie; and it seemed clear to all the realists of Europe that he and probably his dynasty would last.

So, postponing any hope of fulfilling his full destiny, Louis set himself to such good works as lay to his hand. As he could not give humanity the full benefit of his benevolent despotism, he could help them to all the minor benefits of liberty. Therefore, he joined the Carbonari.

This was a secret society, of a style which a few generations hence they may find hard to understand. It combined the most merciless and gloomy methods, with the mildest and happiest ideals. The realization of an earthly paradise through private assassination and street war. It



had borrowed from mostly French sources the furniture of its ideal; the bliss of universal suffrage from the Revolution, the decoration of nationalism, from, of course, Napoleon. It was extremely competent, terrible, and widespread; no one who had ever joined it could desert until the millennium under pain of death. In the Europe that was preparing for 1848, the Carbonari were near the centre of a web-work of obscurely affiliated and sympathetic societies, from Ireland to the Bosphorus.

Nor did the prince simply play at conspiracy. The secrets of the Carbonari to this day are no more accessible than those of the Society of Jesus; but it is known there was no room among them for parlor members. In 1831 they organized a rising in the Romagna; Louis was captured after the hot little affair of the taking and retaking of Civit  Castellana. His mother with greatest difficulty succeeded in contriving his release from the Austrian dungeon where he was confined; high diplomacy failing, she managed to bribe the guards. He escaped in this way to France, and Louis Philippe, with extraordinary magnanimity or weakness, allowed him to stay in Paris for a few months.

Safe back in Arenenberg, Hortense induced him to rest and read for a while. He had by now become, as dreamy, round-eyed boys often do, a rather solemn young man, very serious on the subject of himself. For some reason, in fits and starts throughout his life, he was addicted to writing. To this period belongs his great work, *Political Dreamings*, in which, with many quotations from his grandfather's speeches and sayings, he put into rather imprecise words, at the same time slightly pompous, with a wilful discretion about his own ambitions, the dream that you know all over the world. Every workman, burgher and farmer was to live happy, contented, and free (of any foreign yoke); in his spare time, perhaps to die gloriously for the old country, with which every man is supplied at birth; this golden age to come about by the means of a strictly disciplinarian ruler, one who could truly represent the necessary inner discipline and direction—in fact an early Fascism.

But though this book gave him satisfaction (and for years he never allowed it to go out of print, quoting from it almost up to the end), after its completion he left Arenenberg. He had not yet fallen in love; he was twenty-seven. The family funds were low. Life was calling to him. One of his first mistresses was a Swiss singer named Eleanore. He met her in the next period, his service as an artillery officer in that country. She appears to have brought him some needed funds; a phenomenon often repeated in his life. Evidently a different style from Casanova's but such as is often observable in the case of men with missions, especially when these are very personal.

With a slow even progress, the tilt of things was meanwhile shifting

towards him and his ambition in France. To explain, or even to describe in detail this movement is a subtle and delicate matter, but since necessary if the further adventure is not to be left a mere miracle, must be attempted.

The growth of the Napoleon legend in France during these years is an emotional phenomenon, like the course of a love affair. But are not the strongest motives of that glorified crowd, the nation, the electorate, always of this emotional nature? In moments of indifference, interest may prevail; for all the serious affairs of war and peace, change of government, whenever the voice of the people can make itself heard, it is as hoarse as the shout of a mob, surcharged with hate, or chuckles or love.

In the engagement of the Orléans king (for such it was), the responsables were a thinking class, pursuing their interest, who imposed their will on the incurably sentimental mob by force and manoeuvres. That was its only, but fatal weakness; the people, forced into a sort of marriage of reason with the Orléans family, like Madame Bovary found it emotionally unbearable. In these circumstances, the amorous giantess looked round for lovers. Two presented themselves, the democratic dream, and the Napoleon myth. The first is none of our business, and indeed there was not a straight choice between them, for whereas the Republic excluded the Empire, the Empire offered, not certainly logically or rationally, but in the hazy, quasi-feminine mode in which the people themselves prefer to think, all the handsome traits of the Republic. We have remarked this in Louis' *Political Dreamings*.

But how out of a thick, short, yellow chrysalis, the Emperor of history, the gloriously colored butterfly of the myth arrived, is a mystery of imaginative morphology. I can see, darkly, certain factors. The veterans were either dead or fallen into the story-telling age, and no old soldier ever tells how he hated the draft. Thirty years after any war, or much less, all check on soldiers' stories of their doings is buried in dusty files; the returning enemies of Bonaparte had destroyed and interdicted even these records. And so I suppose there was hardly a man over forty in any village of the land who had not been present at the most dramatic and pictorial moments of the great campaigns; who had not seen and actually been patted on the cheek by the Emperor. And Napoleon himself, in the course of this process, had recovered his youth, his romance, and his fire. The haggard yellow man in a coach of Waterloo was gone; the little corporal had put on the everlasting unchangeability of an artistic creation; he was as fixed and as real as Achilles, or Hamlet, or Sigurd.

So every fireside was a shrine of the new religion. Every youth in

the land, fretted by that past of all young men, the consciousness of insignificance, heard nightly, in the resentment that has three parts of envy, some grown man telling, "When we were lined up, in front of the enemy, I remember the Emperor himself, on his horse. . . ." Or, if he were a petty quill-driving youth, imagine the effect of that one which begins: "In garrison in Warsaw, we Hussar officers used to ride out every evening in a great park, on the outskirts, where all the fashionable society of the city used to take the air. Well, one evening. . . ."

Then—you could fill an encyclopedia with reasons—there was the poet Béranger. A poet, like an orator, has little influence when he utters the unpublished. But when either of them gives expression to what is struggling in the underconsciousness of all men, then he is as irresistible as the fountains of the great deep in Genesis. So this Béranger put into insolent little lilts, along with a profusion of new ways of courting women, praises of the old glory, taunts for the new regime, and these were sold everywhere and diffused as it were with the air. This, if you like, was propaganda. Strange and unlikely that Napoleon should have had a poet, and such an enchantingly light and gay one; but so it was.

In spite of all that young intellectuals could do about it, when this people of France were bored they dreamed, not of republics, but of a master; when they wept, it was not for Sieyès or Robespierre, but Marshal Ney and Bonaparte. All this emotion, this homesickness, was, as it were, unowned, like the first yearnings of a virgin. Hardly ten people had even heard of Louis; probably no single person thought seriously of his claims. Bonapartism was a feeling, a reverie reflected entirely into the past; it was not a pact, but a sigh, "O the old drums and fifes," "O the old days, the old deeds"; a music, a haunting tune, that to the words of Béranger girls hummed as they did their ironing, that street boys whistled on their errands.

It was Louis' necessity to capture this nostalgia, to condense this vapour on himself. To this he now began to set himself with a curious variety of that purified will which is the tool of all adventure; he was indeed single-minded, and imagist, he composed a momentum. All this in his own style, which was both flexible and tough, sweetly obstinate, as his mother once irritably diagnosed. Nothing could really deflect him. But at every moment he seemed to waver.

His first attempt was a failure to the point of the ridiculous. With an uneven band of friends, he worked out a conspiracy which left everything to luck after the first movement; so, with Eleanore and a Carbonarist named Fialin, one old colonel and a little lieutenant, he betook himself in disguise to Strassburg and tried to bribe the soldiers of the garrison to mutiny for him. He was almost reluctantly seized by the

secret police along with too much incriminating evidence to worry to take away, and without making a ripple or provoking a shot deported to America by the government.

In the autumn he returned to Arenenberg in time to see his mother, the once dangerous beauty, on her death-bed. From there he went to Switzerland again, broke with Eleanore, and from there to London.

Here he took up the regular profession, commoner then even than now, of conspirator. He dined in grubby restaurants in the foreign quarter, with seedy, fierce-looking young men, such as Fialin, Arese and the Carbonari. Years of talk, across dirty table-cloths, that always ceased ostentatiously when a stranger approached in ear-shot. Sometimes, since he was a Bonaparte, he was asked to the receptions of the great, where the guests eyed him as a curiosity. D'Orsay, Disraeli, and that omniscient lion-hunter, Lady Blessington, had relations with him. He is said to have enlisted on one occasion as a special policeman during Chartist troubles and patrolled the streets, for a philosophy of reasons. At last he met Miss Howard, who adored him and was very rich.

In 1839, having been delivered of another book, in which he explained that Napoleon was the first martyr of socialism and pacifism, and proved it, he tried again to seize the throne. This time thanks to a "Miss," it was a larger and more luxurious affair. He landed on the beach some miles from the *quai* at Boulogne, with fifty-six followers, and the party moved on towards the town. A squad of coast-guards and *gendarmes* came out to meet them, and Louis (or one of his friends) held out the bags of money to them, encouraging them to cry "*Vive l'Empereur.*" Ensuing were shots; one or two of his friends fell; he and the rest were arrested.

This time the King was nervous, and a regular trial followed. With the help of the grand old advocate Berryer, who defended him, he had more personal publicity from this than he had ever had in his life. Henceforward everyone who could read a newspaper in France had, at any rate, heard of him and his claim. On the other hand, he was condemned to imprisonment for life in a fortress, one of those sentences, both savage and impracticable (for they are never carried out), which are the common faults of an intelligent and worried repression. Nevertheless, they kept him for six whole years in the fortress of Ham, where, still mildly inflexible, he gained the affections of his gaoler's daughter and wrote other books on Bonapartism.

Imprisonment has usually no other effects on such a mind, near crankiness, that is, than to confirm it in its curve, and also, very often to add an accessory of new projects for carrying the old ones out. Back

in London, with increased mildness, obstinacy, and conviction, he continued to plot and devise.

Crank or not, he was complying with the decrees of destiny; and his turn at last came. The revolution of 1848, that "spree-year of Liberty," pushed Louis Philippe and his umbrella out of France. Louis Napoleon, loaded with money for propaganda (which this time he used through a bank and not in its native bags), came back to France. A very small ripple. The astounding progress of the adventure from this point is like one of those conjurer's tricks, hard to see even when it is explained. He arrives then first of all a discredited and fantastic personage in the middle of a revolution, with a grimy fortune, and a name. No serious party welcomes him. His only influential friend outside the boudoirs or the gutter is his half-brother Morny, whose somewhat poetical origins we have related. Morny, also partly with the help of women in love, had made a considerable fortune in commerce and the stock exchange; a daring gambler, a shady character. With them, a third, his Fialin, once a sergeant-major, and now self-appointed Comte de Persigny, author of a book to prove that the Pyramids were the remains of the old Nile Dam, and that Egypt would be turned into a lake if they were destroyed. Cataline himself had no more commonplace inner council.

This 1848 revolution was, under all the superficialities of politics and class interest, the work of the poets; from the beginning, that is, it had no lawful owner. In this time that our trio was working, it had not been settled, who—the poets being out of the question—should inherit the power. The mob? A strong candidate. The bourgeoisie? Divided and bothered under Thiers, who was really an Orléanist. The army of Cavaignac?—The legitimists? Hopeless. In this cauldron, the three fished, they stirred, and at last caught something.

There was no question, truly, of setting party against party, since not one of them took the slightest notice of these neo-imperialists. Cavaignac had got the mob under at last, by force; the issue thereupon narrowed down, and lay seemingly between him and Thiers. At this moment, Louis buys his election as a deputy to Parliament. Naturally, he insisted on making a speech; probably it would have contained once more the whole doctrine as revealed. But on the steps of the tribune where half the house, on hearing his name, watched him waddle, with great curiosity, his nerve failed him. He mumbled something and ignominiously retired. There was a laugh; the Bonaparte cause was over.

But Thiers had noticed him. And Thiers was in extraordinary difficulties. The party of Cavaignac was winning; his own interests, which he never neglected, were in a very poor posture. The thought came to

Thiers, then, possibly at that very moment of ridicule, that here was a last home; to take this imbecile, this dummy, and work up his candidature for the presidency against Cavaignac. Unmistakably the electorate would not have a Thiers; there was the shadow of a hope they might take a Bonaparte.

And so—you will understand, not without hesitations—the bourgeoisie of the Party of Order, under Thiers and Mole, gave their support to Louis in the elections for the Presidency of the Republic in 1848. His program was excessively bizarre and excessively clever. He appealed for the votes of the mob, the revolution, first by his past as active revolutionary, his democratic mysticism. But, also, because of the party of order, he asked for Catholic votes, promising his support to the temporal power of the Pope. Orléanists, like Thiers, voted for him because they calculated that he would be in their hands, or, at worst, would try some mad coup, at a later date when they were ready to lock him up and restore their King. The legitimists may have supported him out of spite against all the other candidates. The result was far out of proportion with all this mere trickery. Instead of being defeated miserably, as Thiers feared, or elected by a meagre majority as he himself hoped, he was swept up in a mighty rush to the Presidency, by 5,434,226 votes to Cavaignac's bare million and a half. Like apprentice sorcerers, his sly users had been messing with the uncontrollable forces of the deep. Most clever people who try to play chess with human beings have a similar accident sooner or later.

An inquest is hardly needed. We have already remarked the huge latent Bonapartism of France; this, like a room full of coal gas, needed only a lighted match. France, without any politician suspecting it, longed only for a Bonaparte, and the fools put one within her reach.

And so, from a catch-vote expedient, Louis has now instantly grown into a ruler, the concrete and redoubtable expression of the will of the people. Thiers, Mole, Cavaignac, all these brilliances and responsibilities fall into a mere opposition. Some vanish, some remain, to live through the next twenty-five years on a diet of pure, undiluted patience, without any admixture of the slightest rational hope of ever again feasting on power.

Having achieved the main chance, the details, hard as they were, were not to beat him and his ready-for-anything bottle-holders, Morny, Persigny, and the rest. Nevertheless he must not lose credit for a suddenly revealed genius for political manoeuvre in this position of a President under a constitution that allowed him hardly any powers, and with a parliament that was openly his enemy. He out-marched, out-fought,

over-reached them all, with the virtuosity of his grandfather at work on an Austrian army. At last, then, there is the 2nd of December, 1851.

This, the classic, the technical model of all *coups d'état*, has evidently many fascinating elevations. That of the resistance, only because it had an immense poet to delineate it, is probably the best known, and will outlast the interest of most of the others, for no other reason. Nevertheless, it was in sober truth, unimportant. He whom the dazzle of style cannot quite blind must see beneath Hugo's "Napoleon the Little," and "The Story of a Crime," how poor, unprepared, nearly silly, in their inadequacy were all the rushings to and fro of the resisting deputies, the sending of the fiery cross round the old working-class stronghold of the Faubourgs, the flimsy barricades and the noble, useless deaths on top of them, which was the sum of the effort to undo what Louis, Morny, Persigny, had so well conceived, and with inexorable competency carried out. So much for the first movement of the piece. The bribing of the army—the new Emperor distributed among the troops every penny he possessed the morning of the deed—the seizure of the central control of the whole machine of state by a minimum of judicious arrests, and sabotages (just one detail: the conspirators had seen to it that even the drums of the national guard were burst the night before, so that they could not be used to raise the alarum); and every printing press in Paris was seized—all this was beautiful in its line and impeccable. Any adventurer henceforward who directs himself towards the destruction of his nation's liberties, and the complete burglary of power must learn the plot of Louis Bonaparte by heart to the letter. Later, it was not quite so good. Two days later, for instance, there was the boulevard massacre. It was a fine Thursday afternoon. From the Madeleine to Bonne Nouvelle, the street was crowded with peaceful citizens and their wives. Perhaps because Morny, who was somewhere there in command, lost his head; or more likely, because the troops were all drunk—that was the later official explanation and excuse—a terrible slaughter, a Catilinian killing took place. The artillery and the infantry fired for ten minutes down the crowded highway. No one counted the dead.

With this ends one of the rarest adventures of Europe, and so begins another. For an adventure differs from a mere feat in that it is tied to the eternally unattainable. Only one end of the rope is in the hand, the other is not visible, and neither prayers, nor daring, nor reason can shake it free.

You may distinguish in what followed the merely picturesque, that is, the spectacle of this band of greedy and needy men composing a court of themselves and enjoying their immeasurable conquest of an Empire

in their own way; or, the fate of the suffused philanthropy of Louis Bonaparte; or, the mechanism of his downfall twenty-five years later which embryologically began the day he stole the crown—to be exact, on the Thursday of the massacre. For that, as certain crimes do, brought him bad luck. It was no more difficult indeed to cover up by those who held the locks of every printing-press in France, to remove its material traces from the pavement, than all the rest of the deed. But it put the Republicans irreconcilably against him; and worse still, the poets. I have heard it said by an astute politician that the worst handicap of the new regime, that finally brought it down was that all the poets, Victor Hugo, naturally in exile, in chief, were against it. It may be true in the same sense that its potential beginning was in the songs of Béranger.

And yet these almighty muses, who break and build empires oftener than the Philistines can imagine, had serious reasons to esteem the Third Empire. Paris, for example, the world city. From the champagne-culture of Montmartre to the matriarchal civilization of the Rue de la Paix, the marvellous, unchartered University of Montparnasse, everything that the name Paris brings into mind, without racking your brains, is the demonstrable work, or at any rate result, of Louis Napoleon. Quite apart from the expected tastes of the friend of Miss Howard, Morny, and Persigny, there was a policy, a pure resultant between the necessary repression of Republicans, and the theory of the Emperor that humanity should have a good time. Therefore, Paris, alone of the cities of the world, in the full centre of the Puritan-industrialist reaction that was making every other a desert of respectability, was encouraged, sometimes incited to enjoy itself in any way except in talking politics. You may have thought that the theory which combined despotism with liberty was impracticable. The Paris of the Third Empire proves your logic wrong.

Somehow, as gamblers will best understand, everything at this fortunate stage that the Empire did worked to help this scheme. For fear of any Republican revolt, the old comb of twisted streets, made for barricades and ambushes, death traps for the cavalry, natural trenches against artillery, all this had to be swept away. In the doing of it, Baron Haussmann made Paris not only the easiest policed but the airiest and most beautiful city in the Old World. Do not forget that the Bois de Boulogne is there because Louis himself loved trees. The encouragement of a life of pleasure, the toleration of every possible means of spending money, did not beggar the citizens. On the contrary, it began that huge exodus from the great Puritan regions of England, America, and Germany, which has brought uncountable bil-



lions of "invisible exports" into France. Louis Bonaparte made Paris the first truly cosmopolitan city the world had had since ancient Rome.

And then Paris became not only sinful, but sinfully rich. A whole wing of Zola's immense and untidy master-work is the shocked celebration of this epidemic of wicked wealth by a saving provincial. Strange economic portents were seen for the first time in the skies; for example, money now brought in five per cent, instead of the Orléanist three, and yet everything became cheaper and cheaper. A Fordian circle of consumption and production, whirling the whole community along in its ascending spirals, had been accidentally entered upon, to the dizzy despair of moralists and Republicans alike. To this very day in the remotest suburbs of Lancashire and Ohio old wives still pray for the destruction of Louis Bonaparte's Paris. Now, at the summit of this Babylonian revel of cake and circuses, was the singular court of the Tuileries.

It was highly likely that the Emperor, Morny, Persigny, and the rest of the circle of good friends, would not deprive themselves when everyone else was feasting at their invitation. But they were not mere pirates to practise absolute liberty of amusement—they had a philosophy, a program, and even a tradition. So therefore in their revels there was a deep underlying framework of etiquette. The Emperor, he announced, wished to restore the "usages of the old monarchy, just as he had revived its institutions." Honored guests at these ceremonial banquets have left various interesting records. "The Emperor and his court restored the fashion of knee breeches, which Louis Philippe had abolished. The dinners (at the Castle of Compiègne), were usually set for a hundred at a time. All the numerous court dignitaries were new to their office, and strict. A footman stood behind every chair, and a military band, perhaps rather too noisy, played throughout the meals." But as soon as the table was cleared away, and the lackeys dismissed, freer fun began. "We then danced to the music of a barrel organ played by one of the Italian cousins of the Emperor, Baciocchi. . . ."

In the course of time the Emperor's romantic marriage took place. He had attempted, in vain, to induce one of the more established royal houses of Europe to provide him with a bride and an alliance. But even Queen Victoria, the only ruler to show anything but frigid politeness towards him, could not manage to do so. At last, he obeyed the "dictates of his heart" and made a regular union with a young Spanish lady, of some claims to birth, none to fortune, and many admitted ones to beauty: Eugenia de Montijo, who was twenty-six years old. The speech in which our Emperor announced his choice gives a sufficient

impression, both of his feelings, and of the effect that the step must have made upon his time.

"I will show old Europe that I know a way of teaching her respect for me, not in trying to push in at any price into the family of kings, but in taking up openly the status of a *parvenu*: a glorious title, when it means that one has arrived where I am by the free vote of a great people. My chosen spouse is French by sentiment, by education, and by the memory of the military service of her father. As a Spaniard, she has the additional advantage of not having a family in France who would have to be given title and subsidies! Catholic and pious, gracious and good, she will certainly revive the virtues of good Empress Josephine."

After his marriage, the etiquette and the gaiety became still more remarkable. Miss Howard was given a peerage—other generous friends of the past of her sex were paid off, and at least one expelled from France by force. The Empress was surrounded by four hundred beautiful ladies, hardly one of whom belonged to the old aristocracy. Masked balls were the usual form of state reception. At one of these, the old Grand Duchess of Baden, a connection of the Bonaparte family, "did not disguise her sorrow and surprise, nor her indignation." Both of their Imperial Majesties, and their intimate friends were fond of country life. At Compiègne, in 1857, according to the diplomatic Hubner, who was intimate with the family, "after a lunch under a tent, and races on the grass, we played at the taking of the fort of Malakoff; the hillock that represented the citadel was defended by the Empress and her ladies, who were attacked by the Emperor and his gentlemen friends. It was a little too gay, and a trifle too intimate." Of this last *fête*, the Orléanist press dared to write "that the Emperor rushed to the attack on all fours and grabbed the ladies by the feet." There is a legend, found in that ambiguous authority, Monsieur Claude, Chief of Police of Paris, in his reputed memoirs, that even livelier parties sometimes were arranged. For one of these, he says, a high enclosure was built and it is said that a choir of naked boys and girls gave a performance of classical dancing. There were also the spiritualist *séances*. The Empress was a convinced table-turner at one time. Home, the most famous medium of Europe, was often summoned, and showed the court many wonders. All this, says the dignified Hubner, accustomed to the ways of other and older courts, in its alternation of "rigid ceremony and easy-going gives the impression of newly-rich people trying to play a part too hard for them. This luxury of costumes, of lackeys and gilding is all too new."

For a long while, then, after the bloody accident of the boulevards,

Louis Napoleon enjoyed vulgarly good hands in his game with the gods. He had been obliged, it is true, to be harder than he wished with the Republicans, and, especially after his marriage, more generous to the Catholics and bourgeoisie, his allies in both '48 and '51. His ideal was, if you like, analyzable into a variation of Robin Hoodism, a sentimental banditry. But to the fury of all right-thinking minds, it worked supernaturally well. France became positively bloated, *teste* Zola. The rich were richer, bread and wine were cheap. If only there had been a little poetry mixed in it, it would be reckoned as a golden age. But as you know, Louis had banished all good poets, and business men seldom know how to play the harp. Extra, as the Germans say, to the cheap bread, five per cent money, the invention of the tourist industry, public works and holidays, he threw in a victorious war, sharing with England in the beating of Russia in the Crimea.

The Orsini affair is supposed to close this period of tranquil digestion. Never, of course, was a reign in which the under-history was so luxuriant and obscure; "as a whole the Third Empire was a secret-police case," and no one probably ever will be able to prove he knows the full truth about Orsini. Let us stick to the romance, the only safe guide in the neo-Bonaparte labyrinth. This assassin then was a member of the Carbonari. He and his group were commissioned to recall to Comrade Louis that resignations were not accepted, except from the dead. And so, one evening in January, 1858, at the moment when the Emperor arrived in his carriage at the old Opera (rue Montpensier), Orsini and friends threw three bombs at him, missed, but killed eight bystanders and wounded more than a hundred and fifty. This was the first political use of a bomb—it was an age of novelties.

After that message, the Emperor began to remember, and do something for Italy. The sole reason why he had not before was his entanglement with the ultramontanist party, who were against the Italian revolt, since its program included the annexation of Rome, and the Papal States. Their chief representative at the Tuileries was the Empress herself; after the Orsini affair apparently her opposition ceased. On the obstinate request of the Archbishop of Paris, the Emperor regretfully allowed Orsini to be guillotined. But two months later, in secret, he called Cavour to Paris and arranged with him to declare a war of Italian liberation against Austria.

A foreigner can hardly have any doubt that Louis Napoleon and the French were the real liberators of Ita'y; the revolutions that accompanied their victorious troops were merely an aid. But apart from the natural pride of the Italians, there are several good reasons why there is no gratitude to the man and the nation that won Montebello, Palestro,

Turbigo, Magenta, Solferino. Freeing oppressed nationalities is perhaps the most dangerous of all philanthropic enterprises.

Louis Napoleon, for one thing, had to stop long before the proud *Risorgimento* was satisfied. Moreover, under penalty of the indignation of his own people, he had to show them some more material benefit gained than the consciousness of a good deed, well performed; and hence he annexed (of course after a plebiscite, the grand Napoleonic speciality), Nice, the Riviera, and Savoy. Also the Empress and the Catholics insisted that since he had shown himself such a magnificent Carbonaro at Solferino, he must give his Catholicism a turn in protecting the Papal sovereignty at Rome. And so the same French troops who had created the new Italian kingdom marched straightway afterwards to keep it out of its national capital. This Roman garrison lasted as long as the Empire itself.

The great ideal, the inspiration of his life, of pleasing everyone, and himself at the same time, grew more unmanageable as he grew more anxious about it. The truth was that gradually he was losing his nerve. He remained perhaps to the end outwardly impassive, but inwardly he worried; he had outgrown all the pleasures but that last and only one forbidden to the adventurer, peace. No doubt his painful and chronic illness gave this wish the quality of a physical need.

Morny died; Persigny was chased away by a court cabal of the Empress. A long string of ingenious, disastrous enterprises for satisfying the French; his sentimentalism and his interests led him from bog to marsh. He pushed in as a liberator of Poland; the Russians humiliated him and hustled him out of the matter. Perhaps the ugliest and most daring failure was his long effort to create a Latin Empire in Mexico. The unfortunate Austrian prince whom he had induced to try a coup there was conquered, captured, and shot.

Meanwhile, while the doomed gambler, all his composure in his bearing, was steadily losing hand after hand, another romantic structure, inwardly made of no more solid materials than his own empire, but painted in grey and black, the Reich of Bismarck, was steadily rising in Europe. Here too, in spite of its forbidding look, the mortar was that poetic residue, nationalism, and the framework, that impossible dream, benevolent despotism. As a mushroom displaces a large leaf in a single night, so in twenty years the ramshackle edifice of Louis Napoleon was displaced, cramped and finally overturned by the more organic growth.

In politics, where everything romantic and sentimental is folly, the converse is usually considered true, and every brutality is thought sound sense. Only on such a view was the full scheme of Bismarck a work of far-sighted genius, for with all its airs, it led direct to the

ridiculous horror of 1914. But meanwhile the nonsense of Bonapartism was not a match for its illegitimate cousin, the graver, more prosy nonsense of "blood and iron." Louis, staggering from foot to foot, scratching round desperately for the impossible balance that was to please everyone, including God or at any rate the pious Empress, promising to go the rescue of Schleswig-Holstein in the name of the rights of small nations, retiring from that promise to please the peace party at home, allying himself with the Italians to counterweight the Prussians, retreating from that alliance because it meant the abandonment of the cause of the Pope, finally actually allying himself with Bismarck, at Biarritz, shows all the symptoms of approaching ruin, long before it came. In these last years his whole policy lurches and reels like a drunken or dying man.

Still for one instant he seemed to regain his feet. He had weakened the whole repression; the Republicans were allowed to return, even to have newspapers. From end to end of the country they, very properly, used this concession, this weakness, to ring round the beast, to undermine him, to goad him, to prepare his end. And yet, towards the very end, he somehow had the courage to face them all; to make one last charge in the open. You may feel it either humorous or pathetic that that act, too, took the form of trying and winning one last plebiscite. It is said to have been organized honestly enough; its result was 7,358,786 votes in his favor to 1,571,939 against. The largest majority a Bonaparte ever had.

A few weeks later, the Emperor, his dynasty, his cause and France fell headlong into the Prussian war.

And so, in a muddle of blood, ends the story. From Sedan, the extreme edge of history, with his last gesture before oblivion and obscurity engulfed him, Louis sent the telegram to his Empress. "The army is defeated and captive. I myself am a prisoner."

Poor devil, he never had much style.

# Thomas Jefferson, Social Architect

(CHARLES) PHILLIPS RUSSELL (1885- )

Phillips Russell was born and educated in the Piedmont country of North Carolina, and after various travels, ventures, and adventures returned there to teach journalism and creative writing at the University of North Carolina, where he is now Professor of English. As a boy he worked in the local printing shop at Rockingham and wrote for the town paper. He attended the University of North Carolina, where his grandfather and great-grandfather had been professors of mathematics. Graduating in 1904, he did newspaper work in Charlotte and then moved to New York City, continuing his newspaper career and writing for various magazines. The outbreak of the World War in 1914 brought him home after a year in Europe; he resumed his newspaper work, this time in Philadelphia. When the war ended, Europe beckoned again, and five years were spent abroad. In this period he contributed to English and American periodicals and served for a time on the London *Daily Express*. In Paris and London he had the good fortune to come upon certain new material on Benjamin Franklin as a European envoy. Out of this discovery grew his first book, *Benjamin Franklin: The First Civilized American* (1926), which met a mixed critical response but sold eight printings within a few months. The somewhat patronizing tone of parts of the book, its irony, and its new frankness on the subject of Benjamin Franklin's morals and beliefs were evidences of the influence of the "new biography," though the author contended, with a good deal of obvious truth, that the "new biography" is no newer than Plutarch. Various biographies followed the first: *John Paul Jones: Man of Action* (1927), *Emerson: The Wisest American* (1929), *William the Conqueror* (1933), and *Harvesters* (1932), a collection of shorter biographies of Frederick II of Germany, Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus, Luther, Cortes, James Watt, and Thomas Jefferson. One novel, *Fumbler* (1928), written during London days, was not published until the author's return to America. *Red Tiger* (1929) is a narrative of the author's travels through Mexico and Yucatan with the illustrator Leon Underwood. The once-lost Maya cities, the rivers of Tobasco, the Sierra Madre mountains, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and many scenes unvisited by men of North America since Stephens and Catherwood, another writer and illustrator, in 1839, are described in one of the author's most vivid books. His most recent book, *The Glittering Century* (1936), is an attempt, none too well integrated, to set forth the main tendencies, the atmosphere, the social modes of the eighteenth century, largely through glimpses, often lively but too sketchy and rapid, of typical figures such as Louis XIV, Rousseau, Voltaire, Catherine of

Russia, Frederick the Great, the Georges, Chesterfield, Adam Smith, Bayle, Talleyrand, Wesley, Damiens, and Arthur Young. The book is difficult to classify, but it belongs to social history rather than biography.

Professor Russell's work in biography has shown a good deal of growth since *Benjamin Franklin* appeared. *John Paul Jones* is a better work, and his *Emerson*, though it adds no new biographical material, brings the charm and strength of the man Emerson so vividly to life that the book has more artistic value than many a more pretentious volume. The virtues of these books are primarily virtues of surface. The style at best is lively, graphic, vigorous; the author has the saving grace of humor and he writes with an engaging gusto and zest for life. His interpretations have not been profoundly new or based upon exhaustive study and, at his worst, he tends to facile improvisation, loose texture, and a style of journalese. But he has been an unpretentious writer whose work is frankly leveled at the general reader, and he has played a very useful part in the recent movement in biographical writing. No reader of *John Paul Jones* or *Emerson* could deny the author's gift for characterization. *Harvesters*, from which "Thomas Jefferson" is taken, presents a number of the chief "gleaners" in the fields of thought and social progress. To each is devoted a rapid survey of salient biographical facts and a commentary on his place in the history of ideas.

# I

IT IS A BELIEF WIDELY HELD that no more devout upholder and able exponent of democracy ever lived than Thomas Jefferson, the American statesman. Indeed, as regards political democracy it is held that Jefferson was the world's chief doctrinaire.

Yet it is plain from Jefferson's writings that when he wrote "people" he meant a chosen people and a special class. He declared what he meant in the following emphatic sentence:

"Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God."

And to show that in this he was not venting an emotion of the moment and intended no mere campaign compliment, he went on to assert:

"While we have land to labour, then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work bench or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, smiths, are wanting in husbandry: but, for the general operations of manufacture, let our work-shops remain in Europe."

Increased experience of the world and observations on foreign soil did not shake his opinions in this respect, for in a letter to John Jay from Paris in 1785 he returned to the theme thus:

"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds. As long therefore as they find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else. . . . I should perhaps wish to turn them to the sea in preference to manufacturers; because, comparing the characters of the two classes, I find the former the most valuable citizens. I consider the class of artificers as the panders of vice, and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned."

From these utterances, paralleled by many others, it is clear that Jefferson's ideal government would have been that of an agrarian republic; that when he proposed "absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority," he would have had this majority composed of men drawing their livelihood from the land; and that when he recommended a government "which should restrain men from injuring one another but otherwise leave them free to regulate their own pursuits," by "pursuits" he meant those activities pertaining to agriculture.

In his enthusiasm for the virtues of the cultivator of the soil, he said: "take a moral case to a plowman and a professor. The former will decide as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules."

It would seem, however, that when Jefferson so emphatically praised the tillers of the earth as the sole worthy citizens of a country, he had not exclusively in mind the farmers of America and the peasants of Europe, but what he often referred to as the whole "landed interest," including, presumably, owners of the land as well as workers on it; as in the following description of his own party in a letter written three years before his death:

"Composed, as we were, of the land and laboring interests of the country, we could not be less anxious for a government of law and order than were the inhabitants of the cities, the strongholds of federalism."

One thing is clear from the foregoing quotations: that Jefferson feared and had an aversion for the industrial artisan, or urban proletarian, as he had indeed for all the human products of cities; and would have preferred to found a republic that would not include him.

Jefferson upheld Cato's praises of farming as "the only art odious to no one" and Cicero's denunciation of the "mercenary trades" of cities. When, nevertheless the new industrial age began to make its influence felt in America, he was willing to admit its operations for the sake of "equilibrium," but would impose strict limitations.



"An equilibrium of agriculture, manufacture, and commerce," he wrote in 1809, "is certainly become essential to our independence. Manufactures, sufficient for our consumption (and no more). Commerce sufficient to carry the surplus produce of agriculture, beyond our own consumption, to a market for exchanging it for articles we cannot raise (and no more). These are the true limits of manufacture and commerce. To go beyond is to increase our dependence on foreign nations . . ."

Jefferson, then, saw danger in the coming of the machine and the machine man. He also feared industry's companion, finance. He saw how men could be victimized by their moneys, uncertain and manipulable.

"The parasite institution of banks," he wrote the Frenchman, Destutt Tracy in 1818, "is now consuming the public industry. The flood, with which they are now deluging us, of nominal money, has placed us completely without any certain measure of value."

Prices everywhere, but values lost to view; for a century and a quarter after Jefferson's death in 1826 the world was to be troubled by that condition.

Jefferson's foresight as well as insight was extraordinarily keen. It is remarkable how many of his predictions as to the result of certain policies and modes of action have come true in his country's life. In certain particulars he erred, and erred grossly, but in others he was clairvoyant. He was not a man of surpassing imagination; his thought went along mostly pedestrian-fashion. Though well read, his studies, though superior to those of most public men of his time, were not in every respect wide or profound. Whence then came his sympathy for the land-man, his confidence in the land-man's character and judgment in building and directing a nation?

## II

Commonly behind a great man is found a great mother. We know little of Jefferson's mother except that she was an Englishwoman, that her people settled among the tidewater aristocracy of Virginia, that she was a Randolph, and that she died early.

But of Jefferson's father we are more certain. Peter Jefferson was of stout, land-loving stock believed to be of Welsh origin. He was not content with his first thousand acres, but must needs add four hundred more from a neighbor. To acquire more and yet more acres is characteristic of the land-lover; he will buy land, even though he hold ample, to the point of impoverishment. Land never sates him, never wearies him. He chooses no other pleasure than to have it, linger over it, wrap himself up in it. Something of this sheer love of land he must have

imparted to his son; for Thomas added so much to his acreage that it eventually all but ruined him.

Peter Jefferson chose to live not in the tidewater country, where lay the rich and fashion-loving estates, but in upland Virginia, among the hills that westward rear their heads into the Blue Ridge Mountains. This was significant for Thomas. The hillman is a being different from the flatlander, and if less suave and clever, is sturdier, more eccentric, cares less about correctitudes. Peter's choice meant that his son would have as neighbors and companions small farmers rather than great planters, land-workers rather than estate-owners, and so would learn their life and views.

Peter had had scant schooling, but determined that Thomas should have much. He encouraged Thomas to read aloud from the classics around the fireside, sent him to schools, impressed upon him his desire that he should have a college education. Thomas was his eldest son and it was natural for the father to concentrate upon him his keenest hopes. Peter left behind him no record of such interest in his other children, and it may have been that Thomas received these extra attentions because he most closely reflected his father's views.

Peter rose to some height in his little upland world. He surveyed lands for his own county of Albemarle, became a magistrate and militia colonel, was elected to the House of Burgesses, and then died, aged fifty. His wife was already dead. Hence at fourteen Thomas became his own man—as much of him as was not his father's.

### III

Thomas decided for himself that at seventeen he should go to the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, a bare, politics-obsessed, and sinful little town that except for some training in colonial social graces offered few advantages to Thomas except in one respect: it brought him into a conversational circle in which no small part of his education was gained. This circle had four corners. At one sat Francis Fauquier, the accomplished and gambling governor; at another George Wythe, lawyer and scholar; at the third Dr. William Small of Scotland, member of the William and Mary faculty, which he later quitted to return home, where he became the friend of his fellow Scot, James Watt. All these were mature men. At the fourth corner, as an equal and comrade, sat the student Jefferson. The little club lasted nearly two years.

Of his three fellow members, chiefest in Jefferson's eyes was Dr. Small, of whom he afterwards wrote:

"It was my good fortune, and that probably fixed the destinies of my life, that Doctor William Small of Scotland was then Professor of

Mathematics, a man profound in most of the useful branches of science, with a happy talent of communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, and an enlarged and liberal mind. He, most happily for me, became soon attached to me, and made me his daily companion when not engaged in the school; and from his conversation I got my first views of the expansion of science, and of the system of things in which we are placed."

"Fixed the destinies" of a promising young man's life; gave him his "first views" of certain useful branches of knowledge—O rare Dr. Small.

Nature and Dr. Small meant that Jefferson should be a scientist; the embryo United States made him a politician. But Dr. Small did succeed in unalterably fixing in him a taste for mathematics. Throughout his life Jefferson was a figurer, a counter, and a formula-finder. Mathematics is self-contained, self-enclosed. Here lies a clue to Jefferson.

#### IV

When Thomas Jefferson emerged into life as lawyer and proprietor of the many upland acres left to him by his father, the world saw him as a tall and somewhat loose-jointed young man who sat, or rather lounged, in chairs as if he had difficulty in arranging his legs. He was sandy-haired and given to freckles. He dressed in good stuffs, but carelessly. After his return from his years in France, his dress was richer and more careful. As he became older, his bearing and looks gained in distinction and in his old age he was an imposing figure. His voice was never good, being husky, and his public utterances, read from manuscript, were often delivered in too low a tone.

Under his father's tutelage, he learned to ride for hours without tiring, and he wrote in praise of walking. Ball games he despised—"too violent for the body and stamp no character on the mind." His sinewy health carried him to the age of eighty-three with eyes and teeth still sound. He could work fifteen hours a day without complaint. He had few ailments, except an occasional spell of head-aches, probably nervous in origin, for beneath his external calm he was sensitive and often shrinking. By nature he was persistent, but no fighter. Disputes and struggles tired and bored him. His method was to persuade rather than overbear. In mold he was practical and objective. A primrose by the river's brim was to him something to get seeds from. And he had no more sense of humor than a fish.

Jefferson was conspicuously talented. His feats in drawing and architecture are known. He was forever tearing down, altering and building. He was an inventor of several useful devices. He could talk, write and act ably. His table was always bountiful—visitors fairly ate him into the

poorhouse, but he dined cheerfully on vegetables, took little wine, and cared nothing for gambling, then one of the beloved activities of the Virginians. In his youth he liked social gayeties, but moderated them after a certain desired Belinda had married another man. His chief diversion was music. "This," he wrote, "is the favorite passion of my soul, and fortune has cast my lot in a country where it is in a state of deplorable barbarism." He played the violin and sometimes practiced three hours a day.

Superior to music, however, was his passion for mathematics. He was forever counting, weighing, measuring. He diligently kept accounts and converted everything into figures, from the dimensions of his home at Monticello, "the little mountain," to his wedding fees and tips. Even an injury to his right hand failed to keep him from recording figures with his left—temperatures, dates, costs.

Supremest passion of all was his yearning for and over the land. He eventually owned nearly eleven thousand acres. Less than a fifth was cultivated. Like so many inordinate land-lovers, he was only a moderately successful farmer, and in his last days was virtually a ruined man. For this state, however, politics and over-generosity were partly to blame. To attend his shoals of guests he kept thirty to forty house-servants.

In things owned and in style of living, in tastes and temperament, he seemed fated to be, in the narrower sense, an aristocrat. And yet some compulsion made him a spokesman for the common man, and history calls him chiefest of the theoreticians of democracy. From defining this word "democracy," however, history often refrains.

## v

As member of the Virginia house, Jefferson early disclosed the mold of his mind. One of his bills aimed at the repeal of the laws of entail to "prevent the accumulation and perpetuation of wealth in select families." Another bill would stop the custom of primogeniture, which passed estates intact to the eldest son.

A third bill decreed religious liberty. Here was one culmination of the struggle begun by Frederick II and carried a step further by Luther. In Europe the power of the Roman Church in politics had been partly broken down, but in America the Protestant Church had shown itself scarcely less eager to be the Siamese twin of the State. In Virginia religion was a political monopoly of the Church of England.

These four measures laid the foundation for the ideal commonwealth on whose architecture Jefferson labored for the rest of his life. The first two were plainly intended to break up the great estates given as

enormous land-grants by distant English kings to miscellaneous favorites and gentlemen. These estates Jefferson presumably hoped would pass into the hands of smaller holders, yeomen no doubt similar to those described by his one-time guest, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar: "plain, honest and rational neighbors, some of them well informed and men of reading, all superintending their farms, hospitable and friendly, and speaking nothing but English." These men would be at the base of Jefferson's structure, and what rested on them, such as a government, would be a government of, by, and especially for them.

Such farmers Jefferson could not have regarded as very efficient. He once recorded it that "our best farmers . . . get from ten to twenty bushels of wheat to the acre; our worst . . . from six to eighteen"; and the Duke of Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, his guest in 1796, commented on "the detestable method" of farming followed in Virginia and condemned it as "at all times insufficient in a country where agriculture is well understood," no doubt meaning France.

Nevertheless Jefferson would have his foundation-men rooted in the land. Their crops, although scanty, might suffice for a sparse, colonial population. A man having land has permanent employment. To that extent he is anchored and so can be trusted, for "every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone."

It happened that at the time Jefferson was serving in the Virginia House of Burgesses, James Watt, friend of Jefferson's friend, Dr. Small, was in England improving and maturing his power-delivering steam-engine—the invention that was to break down all of Jefferson's schemes for a republic based on land-cultivating men.

The steam-engine had not yet reached America, and probably no word of it had yet penetrated to the hills among which Jefferson had his farms; but already, with the help received from England's enclosure acts, it was showing its tendency to draw men off the land and force them into the towns, where it converted them into artisans, mechanics, and artificers, whom Jefferson ranked as citizens far below farmers and even fishermen.

The steam-engine tended to foster the rise of swollen cities, which Jefferson regarded as too often the seats of federalism, centralism, and financialism—all, in his view, inevitably corrupting.

The steam-engine tended to transfer the centre of power from agriculture to industry, and to concentrate the attention and care of men on the latter at the expense of the former. The process, ferried from England to America and rapidly linked to trade and banking as soon as the colonies had definitely detached themselves from the mother country, had in the first quarter of the nineteenth century been de-

veloped so fast that Jefferson was able to see its effects. A year before his death he wrote mournfully of those persons who "now look to a single and splendid government of an aristocracy founded on banking institutions and moneyed corporations, under the guise and cloak of their favoured branches of manufactures, commerce and navigation, riding and ruling over the plundered ploughman and beggared yeomanry."

So, although Jefferson's Virginia bills had meantime helped to break up the landed aristocracy of the great estates, the new aristocracy that had arisen out of the steam-engine's boiler was not at all that one of "virtue and talent" which he had dreamed of. And at this very moment the tide of power was leaving the agricultural South for the industrial North, carrying with it population, capital, political influence. Already land-values below the Potomac were falling, stately manorial houses were decaying, broad acres were being abandoned to gulleys and weeds. A well-propped leisure was packing its bags, to leave behind only a struggling and genteel poverty, the ghost of a tradition, the lavender scent of an unreturning past. Jefferson himself was in his old age a victim of this departing strength. Virtue and talent could not seem to catch step with power-engines. Watt's steam blasts blew Jefferson's agrarian republic to pieces.

## VI

Jefferson's campaign for liberty of religious opinion in Virginia had more success, and, influencing other communities, ensured that in the nascent republic, even if his bill did not obtain toleration, Church and State would be separate concerns. Except for his authorship of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson was prouder of his Virginia statute for religious freedom than of any other achievement.

In 1776 when Jefferson introduced his bill, the Anglican clergy in Virginia differed in no essentials from other persecuting priesthods. It pursued dissenters with a virulence not far removed from that of the medieval Inquisition. Jefferson was its enemy not only on this ground, but because it drew tithes from all citizens, regardless of belief, and above all because it was an arm of the ruling aristocracy. Ten years' work was required to get the statute made law; its final passage was due to the efforts of James Madison.

Throughout his public life Jefferson was the target of clerical rifle-fire as an atheist. What he could not abide in religions were formulas which froze their creeds. To dogmatic religions he preferred his own system of ethics derived from the precepts of Jesus but not from the Galilean's commentators. "I am a Christian," he once wrote, "in the only sense he [Jesus] wished anyone to be: sincerely attached to his doctrines in

preference to all others . . ." These doctrines he clipped from the gospel texts and arranged into the celebrated "Jefferson Bible," which he himself called *The Philosophy of Jesus*, and in which he took great satisfaction.

Less successful were his efforts to have Congress establish a national university which should teach the sciences as well as the classic languages and literatures, and to have his state establish secondary as well as primary schools while enlarging William and Mary College into a State University. Twenty years after he had introduced his education bills Virginia passed a provision for elementary schools, but vaguely left their establishment to the county courts. Twenty more years passed before he obtained incorporation of Central College, which later became the University of Virginia. For this he chose the site, drew the building plans, and directed its organization and policies, "founded in the rights of man."

Jefferson's scheme as regards primary and grammar schools for Virginia was in spirit not very democratic. It seems to have been aimed chiefly at the production of geniuses—male ones, for women were excluded. Each ward or township was to have a school teaching the elements. From each school "the boy of best genius" was to be annually selected and sent to one of twenty grammar schools. In each of these "the best genius of the whole" was to be kept six years. Then the most promising ten would go to William and Mary. "By this means," he wrote, "twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually."

All his life Jefferson had a dread lest the most carefully contrived governmental schemes, his own as well as others, might lead into tyranny; for he saw how any kind of power held by one human being over another could become tyrannical. Hence he held that "the most effectual means of preventing the perversion of power into tyranny are to illuminate as far as possible the minds of the people." His use of the word "rubbish" in connection with pupils indicates he had an inkling that the time might come when some means of separating the educable from the uneducable would be necessary, and when not every boy who might present himself at an institution would be mentally equipped to take advantage of an academic education.

All of Jefferson's educational projects were laid down for boys. Girls did not come into his categories, save as future wives and mothers. And after marriage they must keep clear of politics. French women in their salons might dabble in or influence political events, but American women should be "contented to soothe and calm the minds of their husbands returning ruffled from political debate." Women, he wrote

with eighteenth-century gravity, "to prevent depravation of morals and ambiguity of issue, could not mix promiscuously in the public meetings of men."

Although taking the utmost pains with the upbringing of his two daughters, he once confessed that "a plan of female education has never been a subject of systematic contemplation with me." For his daughter Martha in Paris he suggested this daily program:

"From eight to ten, practice music."

"From ten to one, dance one day, and draw another."

"From one to two, draw on the day you dance, and write a letter the next day."

"From three to four, read French."

"From four to five, exercise yourself in music."

"From five till bedtime, read English, write, etc."

Was it the "etc." in this anemic schedule, which caused Martha to write him for permission to enter a nun's order? For reply her father landed suddenly at the door of her convent school and whisked her away, possibly resolving thereafter to give just a little more "systematic contemplation" to female education.

Here again Jefferson's often uncanny foresight failed him; failed him because he of course could not look ahead to the arrival of all-dominating industry, which would draw women out of homes into factories and offices, and so make the schooling of girls not a matter of argument but of necessity.

And the same daughter, Martha, afterwards Mrs. Peyton Randolph, was compelled after her father's death to endure a painful fate, due in some measure, doubtless, to a lack of training in something else besides music, drawing and dancing. Jefferson, for all his mathematical mind and incessant account-keeping, had never been able to remain out of debt, and when he died, leaving her at Monticello with forty thousand dollars due on the estate, she was too inexperienced in practical affairs to deal with the situation. She was forced out of the handsome home, which Jefferson had designed, built and furnished with such pride, while strangers bought the house and contents, and was saved from want only because the states of South Carolina and Louisiana each voted her ten thousand dollars.

## VII

Besides his project of an education for every man, Jefferson in his elder years outlined one other scheme that he believed would be one of the bulwarks resistant to the centralizing of power which, even before his retirement to country life, was fast setting in. He believed the



division of states into counties insufficient for the honest conduct of public affairs; there must be a yet smaller division "of such size as that every citizen can attend . . . and act in person." To this end he recommended the formation of self-governing wards, or townships. In this respect he was for something nearer a pure democracy; in fact, it was in connection with his championship of wards as autonomous and vigilant units of government that he used the, with him, somewhat rare word "democracy."

Wards, he wrote, would be "pure and elementary republics, the sum of which, taken together, compose the state, and will make of the whole a true democracy as to the business of the wards, which is that of nearest and daily concern."

If we can compare the whole of a people to a wheel, Jefferson believed in keeping the power out at the rim, or near it; the one thing to be avoided was to permit the power to collect and to be administered wholly at the hub. He admitted the tendency of the times as directed by Alexander Hamilton was against him; "I have little hope that the torrent of consolidation can be withstood." The worst effects of consolidation, however, could be averted, he thought, by setting up the ward, as the smallest political unit, as a check on the larger ones. Where the people could attend to and act on affairs without delegating their power to anyone, they would be able to "crush regularly and peaceably the usurpations of their unfaithful agents."

It is noteworthy that in his writings Jefferson always took it for granted that under any system usurpers and unfaithful agents would appear. He often attributed corruption and tyranny to one source—"ambition." On the other hand he was equally sanguine of the check-mating operation of the sense of justice, which he regarded as "instinctive and innate," and of "the moral sense," which he taught was "as much a part of our constitution as that of feeling, seeing and hearing."

This view he elaborated in a letter to his nephew when the nineteenth century was eight years old: "Man was destined for society. His morality, therefore, was to be formed to this object. He was endowed with a sense of right and wrong merely relative to this. This sense is as much part of his nature as the sense of hearing, seeing, feeling; it is the true foundation of morality and not the *to kalon*, truth, etc., as fanciful writers have imagined. The moral sense, or conscience, is as much a part of man as his leg or arm."

It was on this firm belief in the moral sense of the individual that Jefferson rested his hopes when events seemed to indicate that the infant American republic had been kidnapped by "speculators, money-

jobbers, and Tories." Give the people time, and they would in the end detect their enemies and overthrow them. He did not preach "the perfectibility of men," but held that man could approach perfectibility to an indefinite degree. He shared Aristotle's theory of a perfecting tendency in the whole of nature; but whereas the Greek excluded man from nature, Jefferson put him in. What would happen when the ethics of an agrarian civilization encountered the economics of an industrialized one, he of course was in no position to predict. All he could say was: "On our part, we are depending on truth to make itself known, while history is taking a contrary set which may become too inveterate for correction."

## VIII

In Jefferson's own administration, history seemed to point in a certain direction and he took it promptly, although his act involved the riding down of some of his favorite preachings. In 1800 Napoleon Bonaparte received the Louisiana territory back from Spain. This gave France control of the port of New Orleans. Instinctively responding to the expressed forebodings of the one class whose interests he held paramount, the President was alarmed. Through New Orleans passed three-eighths of America's products—tobacco, flour, bacon, pork, lead, cordage, apples. Spain had never interfered with this traffic, but with Napoleon in control the case would be different. In his uneasiness he thought of "marrying" the United States to the British fleet and nation.

In 1802 the mouth of the Mississippi was closed to American ships, and action became instantly necessary. Jefferson sent James Monroe to France with orders to join the United States minister there, R. R. Livingston, in an effort to buy New Orleans and the Florida provinces for two million dollars. Talleyrand, Napoleon's minister, at first was cold, and then one day casually asked how much the United States would give for the whole of Louisiana. Napoleon had decided on war with England and was no longer interested in colonial ventures. The Americans eventually bought the whole territory, comprising what are now fourteen states, for fifteen million dollars.

Jefferson, the enemy of centralized power, ordered the bargain sealed and the treaty signed without having either the authority of the Constitution or the consent of Congress. Begging his friends in Congress to raise no "metaphysical subtleties" and keep quiet as to "constitutional difficulties," he called a special session and his agents rushed the treaty through.

Nor was "the consent of the governed" asked. Instead, he had himself made virtual dictator over the thirty thousand people of the new domain

by inducing Congress to empower him to appoint their governor, legislative councils, and their judges. Their protests caused only a slight modification in their rule from Washington.

Although no one ever denied the immensity of the bargain Jefferson obtained in the Louisiana territory and no one ever demanded its return, historians have handled him roughly for this venture in executive autocracy and centralization. Jefferson often spoke more wisely than he acted, and no more than any other mortal was he clear of inconsistencies and littlenesses. In acting as he did in the Louisiana case, however, he was consistent with his instincts and inner opinions if not with his written maxims. Louisiana was a territory peopled chiefly by landholders and the Mississippi was channel and outlet for farmers and growers. They were producers, and in the interest of producers he was ready to take far steps, even to twisting the constitutionalism of which when blasting the Federalists, he was a strict interpreter of the very letter. In the interest of landholders he doubtless conceived of his action as a right one, and so in accord with "moral sense." To question the ethics of the transaction was to raise one of the "metaphysical subtleties" which at the moment were detestable. Jefferson often excoriated the politicians, but in his moments none was craftier than he.

## IX

It is not to be supposed, however, that Jefferson's primary interest lay in politics or even in social fabrics. He was always protesting that whenever permitted he was only too happy to escape to Monticello and his tranquil Virginia fields. And certainly it was among rural scenes that his enjoyment of life was most obvious. "When I first entered on the stage of public life . . ." he once wrote, "I came to a resolution never . . . to wear any other character than that of a farmer." At the same time, there can be little doubt that politics had a potent if concealed attraction for him; if this were not true, he would not have spent so many of his best years in it. The thing that irresistibly dragged him into the arena was the very thing that appeared to him most hateful in his enemies—a love for wire-pulling. For the sweat and bawling and double-dealing of politics he had an aversion; he was not pugnacious and his sense of dignity made him avoid brawlings and disputes; but to stay behind the stage-set and steer the show with a word here and a suggestion there—that was a game that drew him as the sight of a badly played hand of cards draws a gambler.

Jefferson's wire-pulling was always done with high motives. It was done to elevate the right and defeat the wrong. He liked to do good with a stealthy step and a hand that had its iron grip even though in

the glove of an eighteenth-century gentleman. His intrigues were never for himself, but for the public welfare. His adversaries, however, saw only the stealthy movement in the dark, the quiet gathering of supporters, the secret conference with lieutenants. These things convinced his enemies that behind Jefferson's placid exterior was something devilish and sinister; it was something got out of imported books, they were certain, and therefore unamerican and threatening. They never saw Jefferson when he was most Jeffersonian—shipping seeds and plants from Europe that his fellow planters might benefit, inventing plows, making efficiency studies among his slaves, keeping accounts of harvests, recording the spring arrival of bluebirds, weighing bacon.

In those notebooks in which he so often labored, where they would have expected to find cabalistic formulas for poisoning Alexander Hamilton or blowing up a Philadelphia banker, they would actually have found something like the following:

"100 lb. of green pork makes 88 lb. pickled do. or 75 lb. of bacon."

"A feild lark at Shadwell, the first I ever saw so far Westerly."

"G. Divers supposes that every cubic yard of a stack of wheat yields generally 2 bushels of grain."

"13 cutters  $\times$  12 days = 156, which gives near 2 acres a day for each cutter, supposing 300 acres."

"A barrel of fish costing seven dollars goes as far with the labourers as two hundred pounds of pork costing fourteen dollars."

X

It was currently supposed that Jefferson had got something wicked out of French books, or that while envoy in France, he had at the source imbibed subversive doctrines. His enemies tagged him "Jacobin," "atheist," "French-lover."

As to books, he once wrote that his three greatest men were the Englishmen Bacon, Newton, and Locke. As to the ideas and manners of the French, he more than once recorded his pleasure in intercourse with them. He found in the music offered at Paris "an enjoyment the deprivation of which with us cannot be calculated." In science he found the French "half a dozen years before us." In architecture he found examples before which he could spend hours. He wished his countrymen "to adopt just as much of European politeness" as would temper their dispositions. He liked the attentions he got from France's celebrated men and enjoyed the hospitality of its brilliant women. With the French upper classes he had much in common—"the roughnesses of the human mind are so thoroughly rubbed off with them." But below this showy structure, he perceived a grim reality. After a year he wrote:

"Of twenty millions of people supposed to be in France, I am of the opinion there are nineteen millions more wretched, more accursed in every circumstance of human existence than the most conspicuously wretched individual of the whole United States." The French division of society appeared repulsive when viewed "through Voltaire's observation . . . that every man here must be either the hammer or the anvil." He observed that "the property of this country is absolutely concentrated in a very few hands," but he could not understand why there should be so many beggars "in a country where there is a very considerable population of uncultivated lands." Finally he thus summed up his reflections: "Whenever there is in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural rights. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labour and live on."

## XI

When Jefferson wrote his own proud epitaph as "author of the Declaration of Independence, of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia," he was probably thinking of himself as a public man. In his character as private citizen and farmer, however, he was not so sure of his achievements, and had his moments of despondency.

"I have sometimes asked myself," he once wrote in an undated note, "whether my country is the better for my having lived at all."

He decided to record himself as having been "the instrument of the following things," although he was not sure but that "they would have been done by others." First on his list he put down his having made the little river Rivanna navigable!

"Soon after I came of age," he explained, "I examined its obstructions, set on foot a subscription for removing them, got an Act of Assembly passed and the thing effected, so as to be used completely and freely for carrying down all our produce."

He then barely mentions the Declaration of Independence and his sundry Virginia statutes. Next comes his procuring French olive trees for planting in the Southern states, and his obtaining upland rice from Africa to supersede the wet rice crops which were so fatal to human labor in South Carolina and Georgia. He thought "the greatest service which can be rendered to any country is to add a useful plant to its culture, especially a bread grain; next in value to bread is oil."

He had an olive-oil period which, for him, was most enthusiastic. He even regarded the olive tree as "assuredly the richest gift of heaven. I can scarcely except bread." He saw the Southern states covered with the

good trees from Aix, whose oil would "beget its own demand." But twenty-five years later "not a single orchard" of the five hundred trees he sent over had been planted. His African rice failed in South Carolina, but did well in the hilly parts of Georgia. He also imported Egyptian rice, tried to get some from China, and paid a muleteer to smuggle some rough rice out of Italy, although it was forbidden by law and death was the penalty.

No man is more unscrupulous than he who is bent on doing good. To achieve an aim for the sake of self-gratification may be no more than a picayune vice; to override obstacles, legal or moral, for the sake of a social good can be a consuming passion.

Jefferson, although ordinarily so contained a person, had something like this passion for sending from Europe to his countrymen not only seeds and plants but new inventions and processes. In Paris he was always hunting up workmen, tinkerers, mechanics, and inventors, and watching their methods and devices. Any that struck him as useful, he noted, copied or improved, and sent over to America. He was delighted with a French mechanic's idea of standardizing the parts of muskets, but the acid process of copperplate engraving was merely amusing.

At length he got around to a study of the new steam-pumps in the Paris waterworks. These were no doubt the installations of James Watt and Matthew Boulton. Jefferson was not greatly impressed. Writing a friend he dismissed the new machines as similar in principle to "the fire-engine you have seen described in the books of hydraulics."

Watt and Boulton's steam-driven flour mill at London, the first of its kind, struck him as more interesting. It made "a peck and a half of coal perform exactly as much as a horse in one day can perform," and since "America has abundance of fuel," was more promising.

Thus, although dimly perceiving a use for steam in his own country, Jefferson almost completely missed the import of James Watt's inventions. To an onlooker gifted with the power of seeing into the future the Virginian's casual first examination of the steam-pump and the steam-mill would have been invested with high drama. For here were the machines which, grown large and made more complex, were to nullify his dream of a democracy founded on the plowman. These were the contrivances which, following exactly the process that had taken place in England, were in America to transfer power and population from South to North; were to fill New England with clanging and rapidly burgeoning factories while leaving Virginia and the states below it to a struggling and pauperized agriculture; were to destroy the slave-owning system against which Jefferson's theoretical arguments had been powerless; and were to have their part in impoverishing Jefferson's

last days and in turning over his very home and beloved acres to strangers.

## XII

In imaginative faculties Jefferson was not distinguished; but his mathematical mind had an omnivorous appetite for facts. In this respect he was a true son of the eighteenth century, which century was a continuation of the Renaissance after the seventeenth-century relapse into theological wars.

"Nature," he once wrote, "intended me for the tranquil pursuits of science by rendering them my supreme delight." He was unmistakably Davincian in his remark that "a patient pursuit of facts and cautious combination and comparison of them is the drudgery to which man is subjected by his Maker if he wishes to attain sure knowledge." Da Vinci would not have called it drudgery, but then, in his day, nature and the visible world were new and unexplored. In the eighteenth century delight in knowledge for knowledge's sake had slightly waned; a note of sophistication had come in and utilitarianism was just around the corner. Still, Jefferson was able to write Lafayette that one of his rambles through France "from the olive fields of Pierrelatte to the orangeries of Hieres" was "continued rapture." At Nîmes a good olive tree produced sixty pounds of olives, which yielded fifty pounds of oil. The price was twelve sous retail, ten wholesale. At the fountain there a dropped stone was thirteen seconds reaching the bottom. The wines of Burgundy he found were produced only on the Côte, a ridge five leagues long and half a league wide. The tides of the Mediterranean were even at the equinoxes only two or three feet in range. And so on. He spent ninety days on this journey and from it filled page after page of minute notes—all facts. Aristotle would have delighted in Jefferson and Luther would have hated him.

On arriving in France Jefferson first tried to induce the kingdom of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette to buy more American salted fish, and then collided with Buffon on several points in natural history. The French scientist was skeptical as to certain American animals being of a new species. He had never seen a panther, and believed the Americans, armed with only frontier lore, were mistaken in regarding the moose as different from the reindeer. Jefferson first presented Buffon with a panther skin he happened to have with him. That settled the first argument, but as to the moose Buffon remained skeptical. To convince him, Jefferson sent word all the way to New Hampshire asking John Sullivan, president of that state, to procure him the horns, bones and skin of a genuine moose. Sullivan went to some trouble to

do so, including the ordering out of troops and the cutting of a twenty-mile road. With the remains of the animal he sent over, he was compelled to submit a bill for sixty guineas. The doubting Frenchman was convinced; if he had not been Jefferson might have found his moose-hunt bill a repulsive one to face.

It was in the interest of science, and of French instruction, that Jefferson published in France his *Notes on Virginia*, an astonishing feat even by a mind as encyclopedic as the Monticello sage's. Dry as birch bark, it yet managed to be interesting to the French intellectuals and remains so to his countrymen today. He not only wrote it, but drew the map for it and had it engraved in London. In his scientific conjectures Jefferson was often acute, although always recommending doubt as a good ally. One of his favorite theories related to the possibility of a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. He hoped Spain, as being less dangerous to his country than either France or England, would make the opening; then the Gulf Stream "would soon widen it sufficiently for its own passage." Later he learned that the French had made a survey for such a canal but it had been suppressed for "political reasons."

### XIII

His inordinate love of collecting and recording unadorned data was in part natural, in part perhaps due to a habit cultivated after the death of his wife when he compelled himself to take up interests that would offset the shock and the gap left in his life. Although he was not a demonstrative or outwardly affectionate being, he was a profound home-lover and his devotion to his wife was deep-running and sincere. He was just short of thirty years when in 1772 he married Martha Skelton, then about twenty-three. She was the widow of Bathurst Skelton and the daughter of John Wayles, a lawyer. She seems to have been merry and amiable, but in the latter part of her ten years as Jefferson's wife she suffered from ill health. The record of her children's births and deaths, kept by Jefferson himself, gives melancholy evidence either of her own weakness or of a defective knowledge of child-care all too prevalent at the time. Her first child was the only one of six that survived. Four of them died within one or two years after birth. Her last child was born in May, 1782, and she herself was dead in the following September.

Verging on forty, Jefferson was just on the point of quitting public life for the four-cornered frame which was thenceforward to contain his life—"my family, my friends, my farm and books." The disruption caused by his wife's death left him miserable and brought on a melancholy from which he gradually drew himself only by a renewed and



increased interest in external things. He never married again, but worked, observed, and recorded with an assiduity that scarcely relaxed for the rest of his life. Sixteen thousand of his letters remain, but these were only a fraction of what he wrote. They are partial evidence of an industry that kept every hour resolutely occupied.

## XIV

"You ask," he wrote John Adams during a correspondence which was a consolation to the old age of both, "if I would agree to live my seventy, or rather seventy-three years over again. To which I say, yea. I think with you, that it is a good world on the whole; that it has been framed on a principle of benevolence, and more pleasure than pain dealt out to us. . . . How much pain have cost us the evils which have never happened!"

Jefferson's last days, however, were not pervaded by the tranquillity of mind he had looked forward to after so many years of labor. Debt made his nights sleepless, his days uneasy. For this situation his own rash ignorance in a crisis, outwardly political but inwardly economic, was partly to blame. This crisis subsequently had a major influence not only on his own but, as will be revealed, on the destinies of his country.

In 1807 occurred a world war, which in some respects was a rehearsal for that of 1914 and was due to somewhat parallel causes. It was a movement in the battle of competition between nations which had entered a new phase in Martin Luther's time. To place France foremost in the sun, Napoleon, having conquered all Europe, made one more attempt to injure Great Britain and thus control the seas as well as the land, thereby securing access to the world's markets for the rising middle class of France. Meeting the Russian Czar in secret, he planned to divide Europe with him, excluding Britain. England then declared war, and in doing so, declared the whole of Europe under blockade. Neutral vessels wishing to enter a European port must call at an English one and pay for the privilege. Napoleon countered by ordering such vessels seized.

Unable to fight either England or France, Jefferson as President, was so foolish as to lay on an embargo act which forbade all exports from the United States to foreign nations by land or sea. He thus sought to injure England financially and bring her to terms. Jefferson was unaware of the fact, which was not appreciated by the nations even a century and a quarter later, that goods are ultimately paid for, and can be paid for, not by money, which is only a counter, a token, a medium of exchange; but by other goods. And that any wall like a

tariff, or embargo, which is a tariff made absolute, injures both parties, impoverishing the makers as well as the intended victims.

In this case American producers instantly lost a market for their wheat, tobacco, metals, and other raw materials; but what was worse for a people still chiefly agricultural, they could not obtain the machinery, tools, and manufactured goods on which their work and well-being depended. A paralysis overwhelmed the country which was not resolved until the war of 1812 was concluded.

No state suffered worse than Virginia, whose tobacco, cotton, and other products remained "frozen" and unsold, and Jefferson himself was one of the chief victims of his own embargo. He was prepared to accept a loss on his farm operations and willing to forego the tools, cloth, and occasional luxuries which he was accustomed to receiving from abroad; but his worst losses were hidden. They resulted from a fall in land-values and a general depression which made it impossible to sell off a part of his estate in order that he might keep the rest.

Moreover, the embargo convinced certain astute souls that the United States could no longer be dependent on Europe but must install its own factories. Consequently they set about importing Watt's engines and at goodish profits manufacturing goods for a hungry and expansive home market. It was after 1812 that the United States began to convert itself from an exclusively agricultural to a rapidly self-industrializing nation. The new industries were chiefly confined to the North, where lay the larger markets, the banks, the free labor supply, and the better means of transportation.

In short, Jefferson's Embargo Act was one of the very causes which set in motion forces that eventually ruined not only all his hopes of a republic peopled and ruled chiefly by and for land-holders, but which in his old age threatened to deprive him of his home and his very bed.

Jefferson's land and other property—in 1794 he held 10,647 acres—should have been worth, in the estimate of that able Jeffersonian student, Albert Jay Nock, something like two hundred thousand dollars. On leaving the White House he owed twenty thousand dollars—a debt he had incurred partly by an endless hospitality and partly by helping friends and relatives—and in good times could have paid this off without hardship, but by 1825, when he was too feeble to walk but could still ride, he perceived that as a producer the cards were stacked against him. He thus summed up the situation in terms that a century and a quarter later would still have been applicable: "a long succession of unfruitful years, long-continued low prices, oppressive tariffs levied on other branches [of industry] to maintain that of manufactures . . .

calamitous fluctuations in the value of our circulating medium . . . had long been undermining the state of agriculture."

In 1815 Jefferson had sold his library to Congress for \$23,750. This sum had partly remedied his situation, but when he was eighty-three years old and had only a few months to live, he was compelled to ask the legislature to permit him to sell his property through a lottery. The State feared to establish this precedent, but eventually permitted it. By this time, however, gifts from cities and individuals had begun to arrive, and the lottery, seeming to be unnecessary, was never held. Jefferson was pathetically grateful for these subscriptions as a "pure and unsolicited offering of love." He admitted he had feared being "turned like a dog out of doors"; now he could see "closed with a cloudless sun a serene day of life."

No disease or pain plagued his last days. His strength ebbed gradually, but he continued to read, ride, and write almost to the last. He had one fear: that he might not live to see the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It came, and he was content. On the next July 4, 1826, he died.

A debt of \$40,000 remained hanging over the estate. Subscriptions had already thinned; then they stopped. Within six months his personal property at Monticello was auctioned off, within a year his whole estate was offered for sale. Martha, his only surviving child, was turned out of imposing Monticello without a cent for herself and family.

In one of his last letters to the wife of his old friend and enemy, John Adams, Jefferson considered it proved "that the Being who presides over the world is essentially benevolent." That he should have been permitted to go before this collapse took place was indeed merciful.

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# Lincoln the Radical

ROLLO WALTER BROWN (1880- )

Rollo Walter Brown, an Ohioan educated at Ohio Northern and Harvard universities, has been both a college teacher and a creative writer, following two kinds of career seldom very successfully combined, since they require so large an investment of energies of similar kinds. He has taught at Wabash College, Carleton College, and Harvard University, and has given a good deal of time to comparative study of French and American methods of teaching. On leave of absence from academic duties in the year 1912-13, he investigated French methods at first hand. He has later lectured rather widely on Franco-American relations and on various educational and literary subjects. In his years as a teacher, Brown wrote and edited such works as *The Art of Writing English* (1913), *How the French Boy Learns to Write* (1915), and *The Writer's Art—by Those Who Have Practiced It* (1921).

In 1924, however, Brown resigned his lectureship at Harvard to devote himself more fully to writing. His magazine articles, social criticism of American life, were collected in *The Creative Spirit—an Inquiry into American Life* (1925). Turning to fiction, he has published a series of interesting novels "depicting . . . the struggle of the creative spirit for expression in an unsympathetic environment": *The Firemakers* (1931), *Toward Romance* (1932), *The Hillikin* (1935), and *As of the Gods* (1937). Biography and memoirs have also attracted his very versatile talents. *Dean Briggs* (1926) is an able biography of one of Harvard's and Radcliffe's rarest teachers and administrators, a man whose teaching of the art of writing created a tradition and exerted an influence far beyond classroom walls. *Lonely Americans* (1929) brought together sketches of leaders in education, painting, music, science, literature, and government—Charles W. Eliot, Whistler, MacDowell, George Bellows, C. E. Norton, Raphael Pumpelly, Emily Dickinson, and Lincoln—a group of individualists, "lonely Americans" isolated from the mass of their fellows by thought or intense preoccupation in creative art. *Next Door to a Poet* (1937) was the "memoir of a friendship" with Edwin Arlington Robinson, a valuable addition to the none-too-plentiful personal records of a major poet who was one of the shyest of men. *I Travel by Train* (1939) turned to still another genre of writing—travel sketches of American scenes and manners.

In "Lincoln the Radical" the author has taken for granted a knowledge of the main facts of the career of his subject. Available Lincolnana is so voluminous, and full-length biographies (culminating in Carl Sandburg's recent thoroughgoing study) are so many that the writer

of a short sketch must of necessity concentrate on a single phase. Brown sees Lincoln as a radical whose career passed through certain phases inevitable for a disciple of what then were heresies. It is debatable, of course, whether he has put his finger on the predominant trait of the great character he analyzes or found the real *leitmotif* of that amazing career. Many will miss in this portrait lines, high-lights, and shadows which are for them essential to the picture. But the limits of Brown's sketch are self-imposed and deliberate: he has not attempted to evoke for us all sides of that rangy and restless man, brooding, mystical, humorous, and wise, who has cast his spell forever over the mind of the world. "Lincoln the Radical" illustrates an important method in the writing of biographical sketches: development of a portrait from a dominant trait or a single governing thesis. The limitations of the method are obvious, but it may lead to results which are suggestive and provocative.

HE PROBABLY WOULD FIND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY as difficult as he found the nineteenth. New York City would vote against him, as it did in 1860. Highly respectable citizens in every other part of the country who boast their loyalty to the great tradition of Abraham Lincoln would cast their ballots for somebody else. They would rally to the support of Stephen A. Douglas. For Douglas was an evenly balanced person, a man of judgment, a practical man. He believed in accepting things as he found them. He wanted to know why people couldn't be happy in the nation as their fathers had made it. But Lincoln was lop-sided, engrossed in things as they ought to be, full of visionary and dangerous ideas. Lincoln was a radical.

He passed through the inevitable sequence of the radical with as little deviation as if it had been made especially to fit his single career. He began—the first phase of his sequence—as the poet of the world. He sang the joys and tragedies of his own life, and touched the life of others into a quickened, unfamiliar tempo. It is libel to say—as is commonly said in the turmoil of city streets—that his early surroundings were drab and restrictive. He lived at the heart of one of the most dramatic migrations known to the modern world. The Ohio River and its tributaries were alive with all sorts of rude craft. Expectant families felt the limitations of poverty and social inferiority vanishing as they contemplated wooded hills and rolling green plains that stretched away westward to infinity. Caravans were ever winding through the gaps in the hills, ever wading through ague-haunted low-

lands, ever braving the devastation of tornadoes and the icy suffocation of blizzards—all on the way toward some poetically remote objective.

It was a time for going a little farther than anybody else had gone. There was invitation in whatever required men to extend themselves to the limit. Torrential streams were made to be crossed—by anybody who was strong enough—or followed to their extremities; hills were to be climbed; trees of unimagined circumference were to be felled; fields covered with stumps were to be cultivated; strangers appearing upon the landscape from nowhere in particular were to be tested in strength; settlements active with romantic, muscular people were to be investigated; great fresh silences with moist—or hot—breezes playing through them were to be meditated upon for significant flashes of meaning; cities of amazing grandeur in countries they would never see, were to be read about—by the fortunate ones who could read—and marveled at; enemies possessing the most dramatic shrewdness were to be anticipated and outmatched by unfailing alertness. Life was expansive. No thin plating of sophistication restrained the spirit. No apartment house made men too much at ease to see the poetry of the road that leads from a log cabin.

In such a world everything called for a remaking. Everybody was in some manner engaged at the task. With an ax and a maul and wedges it was one's romantic privilege to contribute to the history of civilization. In Indiana it was a current saying at that time—and much later—that a man who could not take a rifle, an ax, a horse without harness, and a pair of plow-shovels into the woods and with such a beginning produce everything man's comfort required, was no man at all. Fields, houses, utensils, food—all had to be wrought from the abounding earth. Trails had to be converted into roads; streams had to be explored and made useful; cities had to be firmly planted; bridges had to be built—eventually; railroads had to be dreamed of and sought after. County governments had to be developed; courts of justice had to be established; means of a rude education had to be discovered—and as many other means as possible devised for saving to the greatest number of human beings the most fruitful freedom of spirit.

This transformation Lincoln saw taking place everywhere about him. And from the time he was old enough to engage in any self-directed movement he participated in it. As he grew to lank manhood he was especially fascinated by the prospect of making over the spiritual life of the people. As a candidate for the Illinois legislature he stood for education "as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in." He had, too, idealistic dreams about other

changes that ought to be wrought. By the time he was twenty-seven, he had gone on record as favoring woman suffrage. By the time he was thirty-three he had gone on record concerning two other matters. "And when the victory shall be complete," he said near the close of a speech on Washington's Birthday, 1842, "when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on the earth, how proud the title of that land which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those revolutions that shall have ended in that victory!"

Strange dreaming, was it not? But in the vast silent spaces of early Illinois, it was easy to disengage an idea from its entangling surroundings and look at it with steady eyes until its outlines became unconfused. The world he saw was illimitably blessed with the glory of imperfection. Might not one conceive of all sorts of changes to be made—changes for the better? And might not those changes be brought to pass at almost any time? If a man could put his hand into a barrel of rubbish that he had bought—because he wanted the empty barrel—and bring from the unpromising depths a copy of Blackstone's *Commentaries*—a book destined to change his life from that day forth—might not the whole human family be groping around within reach of all sorts of significant possibilities? Long before he ever came upon Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, he was dreaming of a new democracy that would touch sleeping mortals into life. In a world where so many things could be remade, why not remake the social order?

## II

To him his views seemed reasonable beyond question. When he had had nothing else to do he had turned them over in his mind without end. But not everyone looked upon them with such approval. Some persons declared them dangerous and out of place. Not only that. He began to encounter active resistance on the part of organized forces. How anyone should wish to war on plain honesty of thinking he could not understand. Yet even here in this unmade country were institutions that did not want anybody to think too much or too clearly about them, and that did not want to think about themselves at all. He found himself regarded as unusual. He found himself standing more or less apart. So without wholly ceasing to be a poetic dreamer, he passed into the radical's second phase: he became a heretic.

His heresies extended to all three of the fields in which he was accustomed to dream—to politics, to social customs, and to religion. By nature he was one of the most religious of men. In a certain fundamental sense which the passively devout cannot so much as understand, he was a Christian; that is, he believed with Jesus of Nazareth that

the way to find a satisfying life is to seek for it, as little fettered as possible by the categorical thinking of anybody else. He did not accept; he inquired. And when he sat down in the expansive atmosphere of central Illinois and inquired for a God comprehensive enough to satisfy his needs, he did not find him in the religious denominations. The terrifying monster preached about in the pulpits had nothing in common with the great beneficent spirit of the universe before whom he sometimes threw himself in anguish. So in religion he came to be the bad boy of his neighborhood. Nobody could trick him into making a formal confession of his sinfulness. Nobody, not even the resourceful Peter Cartwright, could browbeat him into declaring for the literal, tinsel heaven delimited so scrupulously by delimited minds. A half century and more after his death, men still write about Lincoln the Free Thinker, Lincoln the Mystic, Lincoln Man of God. And he was all of these. That is why the church looked upon him as a suspicious character. That is why, according to his own count, only three of the twenty-three ministers in Springfield stood ready to vote for him for President of the United States.

His heresy in social life consisted of a contempt for pretentiousness. It was not a new heresy. Thomas Jefferson, whom Lincoln once referred to as the man "who was, is, and perhaps will continue to be, the most distinguished politician in our history," had himself tried to think in terms of an unpretentious national life. But after all, Jefferson was an aristocrat—in part, at least, by defect of his times. By the middle of the century, however, the common man had begun to come into possession of some small part of his inheritance. There was a better opportunity to carry a theory of unpretentiousness into practice. If there was to be a certain essential equality among men, should not as many as possible of the artificial barriers between them be broken down? Ought not the official classes to divest themselves of useless trappings? Would not the people find a new incentive to intelligent citizenship in the new unpretentious candor?

But even in his own provincial region, neither the official classes nor the people were ready to surrender the pleasant glamour. If the Honorable So-and-so, or General So-and-so, was preceded with enough awesome whisperings, he was certainly a great man. Douglas, a becomingly dressed bulldog of a little fellow with a resounding voice, rode in special trains, paid gallant compliments to ladies who needed them, and referred to all sorts of distinguished political and social connections "back East" in the most effectively casual manner. How could anyone doubt that he was a powerful thinker and a man of taste?

Lincoln offered his heretical protest. Pretense blinded men and



women to reality. So he sat around as much as he liked with his coat off; he talked with the humblest, who spoke to him with an intimacy of understanding that gave them a respectful sense of equality; he traveled without telling anybody that he regarded himself as a man of potential importance; he rode—when the demands of campaign required—in a caboose with trainmen; and he exercised his sharpest satire on those in high places who sought to be awesome. "By the way, Mr. Speaker," he observed with biting casualness one day in Congress, when he had been flaying General Cass as a make-believe military figure, "did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir; in the days of the Black Hawk war I fought, bled, and came away." The times were yet against him. People to whom simplicity should have made appeal expected a distinguished person to have an exterior unlike their own. In the very business of fighting their battles for them, Lincoln had to engage in a long, silent struggle with them in order to prove that his manner was something they should be proud of instead of something they should disdain.

But these heresies might have been forgiven had he not avowed another infinitely more disquieting. At a time when it was not only fashionable but politically expedient to speak tactfully about human slavery—to pretend to think of it only as a matter of economics or geography or climate—he openly began to assail slavery as a moral wrong. He meant to say what he thought. He meant to reveal just what the country's record had been in matters of human liberty. And what had that record been? "As a nation," he wrote to Joshua F. Speed in Kentucky, "we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it, 'all men are created equal except negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal, except negroes and foreigners and Catholics.' When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure and without the base alloy of hypocrisy." The trouble was that slavery had become socially sacred. He meant to divest it of its robes of sacredness and reveal it as a mighty and hideous figure of death that was touching all of men's political thought with its own corruption.

In the process, he did not hesitate to snatch the purple from other idols, or to make wry faces at them. He assailed the President of the United States. The President, he contended, had been a party to an unjust war against Mexico. In his single term as congressman from Illinois he demanded in his Spot Resolutions that the President show the exact spot on which the war began. Everyone was entitled to know

whether the war at the outset was a Mexican invasion of Texas, or a United States invasion of Mexico. Was he not shockingly impudent? But he was destined to go further. A little afterward (January, 1848) he made a speech in Congress in which he assailed what he called "the sheerest deception" of the President's reasoning. Point by point he took up President Polk's argument and showed how the President was trying to befog the real issue; how he was "trusting to escape scrutiny by fixing the public gaze upon the exceeding brightness of military glory—that attractive rainbow that rises in showers of blood. . . . How like the half-insane mumbling of a fever dream is the whole war part of his late message!"

Nor did he, in those dozen years before the Civil War, restrict his incidental assaults to Democratic presidents. He assailed the Supreme Court. He believed the Dred Scott decision was a legal monstrosity. It held that a slave was property; that a man had a right to take property wherever he chose; therefore, a slave owner had the right to take a slave into a "free" territory and keep him there—as a slave. Lincoln believed that this decision was narrow and prejudiced and corrupt. It was, he contended, political rather than legal. All the circumstances—including the Court's withholding of the decision until after the election of 1856, and the incoming President's exhortation of the people to show good spirit by accepting the decision when it came—pointed to an understanding, a conspiracy, on the part of the Court, the outgoing and incoming Presidents, and certain United States Senators. They were quietly working together to extend slavery to every part of the Union. His charges were declared to be more insolent than his speeches against President Polk and the Mexican war. It was not then fashionable to lock men up for questioning the infallibility of the courts, but he received enough condemnation on the part of his political enemies—headed by Senator Douglas—to keep his mind pleasantly occupied.

But he did not mollify his charges. He had been about courts more or less himself; and he had been a little in the world of politics. Judges sometimes made wrong decisions; they occasionally admitted the fact themselves. And judges were sometimes politicians—a fact which they did not so often admit. Sometimes the politician got the upper hand and made the decision. So why should the judges and Presidents and senators make him out such a pariah just because he had seen through the tricks in this particular instance? They thought they had covered up their tracks; they thought they had worked with undiscoverable secrecy. The frame of the new structure which they had in mind had been carefully cut at different times and in different places. But it had been done with full concerted understanding—"all the tenons and mortises exactly

fitting"—so that some day the actual completion of the structure would be perfectly simple. He could not prove his charges, but he knew they were true, and he meant to say so.

And now that one began to think of the matter, other declarations that he had made in the same period assumed a disturbing character. More heretical than any specific charge against the existing administration was his pronouncement upon government in general. He had declared that "any people anywhere being inclined and having the power have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government, and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable, a most sacred right—a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world." He contended, furthermore, that a chief revolutionary may put down minorities, as we of the Colonies put down the Tories in the course of our revolt against England. Did he believe that this theory was universally applicable? And just what significance was there in his further observation that "it is a quality of revolutions not to go by old lines or old laws, but to break up both and make new ones." When he uttered these words they were only a part of his brief congressional career that the voters of Illinois were not inclined to prolong. But now he had become one of the two most important political figures in the state. His reputation was going to other parts of the country—especially the South. Might it not be well to keep in mind his recorded utterances?

There was nothing in his entire attitude that was very respectful to the constituted authorities. His enemies—including Douglas—openly declared that while he was in Congress he had opposed sending provisions to the United States army in the war against Mexico. They stretched the facts beyond truth. But he did make himself so annoying, and he did stir up so much dissension over the Mexican war that the people of Illinois were ready to consider somebody else for the next term of Congress. And this doctrine of revolutions—did it have any part in his open warfare on slavery? Did it have anything to do with that declaration which everybody said he had made but which was not a matter of public record—the declaration before the first state Republican Convention (1856) to the effect that "we will say to the Southern disunionists, we won't go out of the Union, and you *shan't*"? Was he not on record as disturbing pretty nearly everything?

But he became more heretical still. Just at the time when the South had become so jumpy and so threatening that wise politicians were saying that if the Union were to be saved it would be necessary not only to leave slavery unmolested but to say nothing about it, Lincoln came forward—in the state convention that named him as its candidate for United States senator—with the benumbing pronouncement

not merely that the Union ought not to be saved on that basis, but that it could not. The country could not endure permanently half slave and half free. "A house divided against itself cannot stand. . . . I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other." Was ever utterance more untimely? Here when two or three political wizards had devised all sorts of intricate compromises and balances to keep everybody satisfied, Lincoln was stirring everybody up by saying that the efforts of the wizards were of no avail. Not even his friends—except Herndon—could approve this new position. They had always regarded him as an astute politician. Yet here he was proposing to throw the conservative vote away before the campaign started.

More amazing still, he proposed to wage his campaign by means of a series of debates with Douglas, who sought reflection. Douglas stood sublimely "for the Constitution and the preservation of the Union." His statesmanlike position attracted attention throughout the country. As far east as New York City, Horace Greeley thought the people of Illinois ought to keep away from the "idealistic" Lincoln and swing their support to the sagacious, practical Douglas. But now Lincoln would provide his own destruction if he insisted on giving the Little Giant a chance at him. Douglas assented to one debate in each of the seven congressional districts of the state provided he should have the advantage of opening and closing the discussions four of the seven times. He would keep faith with the fathers and show the people exactly how much statesmanship there was in Lincoln's prejudiced sectional doctrines.

Perhaps no other man in America was capable of doing it better. Douglas was clear-headed; he was an able speaker; he was shrewd; and he possessed a quality that every politician prays for—plausibility. According to some, Douglas would "make mincemeat" of Old Abe before the debates were half over. Just how he meant to do it was indicated in a speech he had made at Bloomington some days before the exchange of letters that resulted in the debates. "Although the Republic," he declared, "has existed from 1789 to this day, divided into Free States and Slave States, yet we are told that in the future it cannot endure unless they shall become all free or all slave. For that reason, he [Lincoln] says . . . that they must be all free. He wishes to go to the Senate of the United States in order to carry out that line of public policy, which will compel all the states in the South to become free. How is he going to do it? Has Congress any power over the subject of slavery in Kentucky or Virginia, or any other state of the Union?

How then, is Mr. Lincoln going to carry out that principle which he says is essential to the existence of the Union, to wit: that slavery must be abolished in all the states of the Union, or must be established in them all? You convince the South that they must either establish slavery in Illinois and in every other free state, or submit to its abolition in every Southern state, and you invite them to make a warfare upon the Northern states in order to establish slavery, for the sake of perpetuating it at home. Thus Mr. Lincoln invites, by his proposition, a war of sections, a war between Illinois and Kentucky, a war between the free states and the slave states, a war between the North and the South, for the purpose of either exterminating slavery in every Southern state, or planting it in every Northern state."

As for himself, he had abiding faith in the wisdom of the fathers who had made the country half slave and half free. He believed that that was the only basis on which the nation could endure. Many parts of the country wished slavery, and this was a nation in which self-government was guaranteed to the people. When territories became states they could decide for themselves just what they preferred in the matter. It was all perfectly simple. Why, then, should Lincoln go about in an effort to incite the people? He himself would never do so. He cared not whether slavery was voted down or voted up. It was purely a matter for the people to decide. Could anything be more reasonable?

Tens of thousands wanted to be present at these gigantic tussles. They drove through the dust and mud of the prairies to the encounters nearest where they lived. They spent uncomfortable nights in their springless wagons or on the ground under them. They stood and listened through long hours in the August sun and the October chill.

At the outset the Little Giant proceeded to do what was expected of him. He rushed into Lincoln and put him on the defensive. He called upon the people to rally to the support of the constituted authorities and the country as the wise fathers had made it—half slave and half free. He warned them against the menace of sectionalism. He would not have one region array itself against another. And especially did he warn them against making the black man in every way the equal of the white. He himself held no brief for equality. "I do not regard the negro as my equal, and positively deny that he is my brother, or any kin to me whatever." And as for the Declaration of Independence, when it is said that all men are created equal, he did not believe the signers of it had in mind "the negroes, the Chinese or Coolies, the Indians, the Japanese, or any other inferior race!"

They heard his maxim-like arguments with applause. He was living up to expectations. Still he did not demolish Old Abe. When Lincoln

stood before them, his shoulders covered with the dust of travel, his voice pitched higher than seemed natural for such a rugged man, they found him interesting. He was not so obvious as Douglas; his point of view required close attention. But he seemed more reasonable than they had expected. He was not hoping for war. He was not certain that there would be one. But he was certain the country could not go on indefinitely in its present state of uncertainty and distrust and compromise. As for the revolutionary-minded fathers who had freed themselves from England and made a Constitution of their own, they had put slavery where they thought it was in the course of ultimate extinction. Had they not provided for the end of the African slave trade? Had they not prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory? "Why stop its spread in one direction and cut off its source in another if they did not look to its being placed in the course of its ultimate extinction?" And had they not been careful to avoid any reference to slaves as such, so that when the days of slavery should ultimately pass, there would be no embarrassing traces of it to humiliate a people whose government supposedly had been founded in human freedom?

The trouble was that the question had been reopened—at the time of the Missouri Compromise and at numerous times since. The South had been zealous in keeping the question open. And the Dred Scott decision, by making it possible for a slave owner to take his slaves—his property—with him into a territory, was intended to keep it open until the institution had become established in every part of the country, North as well as South. It had made slavery legal in a territory, despite what the people of the territory might vote. It had reduced Douglas's pet theory of popular sovereignty exactly to the thinness of "the homeopathic soup that was made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had starved to death." So far as the territories were concerned, it simply meant "that if any one man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object." And who knew, if we accepted this dishonest ruling of the Court as a sacred "Thus saith the Lord," that we might not wake up some morning and find that the Court had ruled that a slave owner could take his slave—his property—not merely into a territory but into a free state. And then if we accepted that decision as we had been counseled to accept all decisions of the Court—as a "Thus saith the Lord"—slavery would have become impregnable in every part of the country.

So the country had come, after all, exactly to the place where he said it had come; to the place where it had to decide whether it preferred to limit slavery with "ultimate extinction" in mind. In the crisis, he was not going to be neutral. He favored "ultimate extinction." He did

not propose to molest slavery in the states where it was established. But if it were not allowed to spread, and all the new territories should be free territories, eventually the atmosphere in the United States would become an atmosphere of freedom and the institution would slowly pass out of existence without economic upheaval. But slavery was a moral wrong, no matter how many of one's good friends happened to be in the business, and he would enter into no proposed compromise that accepted it as a moral right. Compromise had already done its utmost, and that utmost had been unavailing.

Ought he to be sent to the Senate of the United States? The people of Illinois did not quite think so. Douglas was returned. But Lincoln had been heard. Especially had he been heard in the South. And the South understood Lincoln. "If such an enemy of slavery ever goes to the White House," the people of the South said, "we will go out of the Union." What did it matter if he had declared that he had no intention of molesting slavery where it existed; if he meant only to prevent its spread and to put it where it would be in the course of ultimate extinction? When a man is sentenced to death, does he find much comfort in being assured that it may not be strangling at all, but starvation? The South thanked him for his honesty in making clear exactly where he stood.

His defeat did not deter him. Nor did the menacing attitude of the South. Nor did the clamour of many Republicans who were fearful. He had liked that "house divided" speech from the first. "If I had to draw a pen across my record and erase my whole life from sight, and I had one poor gift or choice left as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerasable." And he was not going to be stampeded by his associates, the South, or anybody else.

He went to Columbus, Ohio, and in a speech in reply to an article by Senator Douglas in *Harper's Magazine*, reiterated the doctrine. Douglas had said that if the people in a territory did not want slavery, they could exclude it by local police regulation even if the Supreme Court had held it legal to take slaves there. Lincoln riddled the argument, which, he said, resolved itself into this absurdity: "that a thing may be lawfully driven away from where it has a lawful right to be." And so far as Douglas's caring not whether slavery was voted down or voted up, the doctrine was quite in keeping with Douglas's character. "He is so put up by nature that a lash upon his back would hurt him, but a lash upon anybody else's back does not hurt him." At Cincinnati he expressed the same doctrine—with variations defiantly addressed to the Kentuckians. At Leavenworth, Kansas, he went further and let it

be known what might be expected if the slave states should try to secede when he chanced to have anything to do with the matter. "Your own statement of it is that if the Black Republicans elect a President you 'won't stand it.' You will break up the Union. If we shall constitutionally elect a President, it will be our duty to see that you submit. Old John Brown has been executed for treason against a state. We cannot object, even though he agreed with us in thinking slavery wrong. That cannot excuse violence, bloodshed, and treason. It could avail him nothing that he might think himself right. So, if we constitutionally elect a President, and therefore you undertake to destroy the Union, it will be our duty to deal with you as old John Brown was dealt with."

At Cooper Union, smarting under the clamorous accusation that he was a revolutionary, he placed great emphasis upon his ultraconservatism: he agreed with men as old-fashioned as the revolutionary founders of the nation! That he was one with those rebellious spirits who favored putting slavery where it would be in the course of ultimate extinction, nobody could deny. But calling himself a conservative on that account was only a neat way of forcing his opponents to assume the burden of proof—if they would. Radical and conservative are not estimated according to the beliefs and practices of the preceding century; they are estimated according to the beliefs and practices of the time when the question is up. The people of the South who lived in his time did not think—could not think—according to beliefs held in 1776 or 1787. For them the "existing order" was the contemporary status—the one in which slavery was accepted and allowed to have very much its own way. That that was the temper of the times Lincoln himself had often declared. So when he proposed a restrictive policy, even if his proposal did chance to accord with a view held in the eighteenth century, he and not the South was the revolutionary.

Ought he to be made President? The South had no illusions on the subject. The best they could hope for, in so far as he might have authority, was "ultimate extinction." Slaveholders had just as much reason to expect him to be generous toward slavery as legalized saloonkeepers would have to expect generosity from a fair-minded but ardent temperance reformer. They did not need to reason it all out in cold blood; they could feel the unfriendly atmosphere descending from the northward.

The border regions begged for a candidate and a platform that would be conciliatory. "A little conservatism on the part of the North," John Speed of Louisville wrote to Henry S. Lane of Indiana in 1859, "would secure a large vote in several of the slave states." As a platform, he



thought opposition to acquiring further slave territory, non-interference with slavery as it existed, opposition to the African slave trade, internal improvements by the federal government, and any pleasing generalities that might be "inserted as matters of taste," would be about right. Other platform makers farther north likewise proposed planks designed to reach across the Ohio river. And in the lists of presidential possibilities, Lincoln's name was not always to be found. Many who believed that Seward could not carry states with a border population as large as that of Indiana and Ohio, proposed that Lane himself be the candidate. He had won respect and admiration as the permanent chairman of the first national Republican convention. "My impression," wrote one of his correspondents in a letter explaining why Bates and Cameron and Reed and Fessenden and Pennington would not do—the last named for the brief reason that he was "an egotistical old granny"—"is that either Lincoln or yourself could by some exertion be nominated. I think you have a better record and as good a location." But Lane, a clear thinker and a man of sensitive conscience, became convinced that Lincoln ought to be named. With zeal he gave him that great necessary first support outside Illinois that convinced the country at large that Lincoln was more than a "favorite son" candidate.

Through such loyalties, through certain Eastern enmities against Seward, and through "breaks" in the political game, Lincoln was nominated. Through such loyalties and through other "breaks" in the political game, he managed to receive approximately 1,850,000 votes out of approximately 4,650,000. But when the 2,800,000 votes against him were conveniently distributed, his votes were enough to elect him. He would not necessarily have been defeated had all the opposition centered in one candidate instead of three. Still, the victory was not very flattering. In the South, his opponents received something like fifty times as many votes as he did. In the North their combined votes were only three hundred thousand behind his own. Douglas alone had received almost two-thirds as many votes in the North as he had. No one could call him a popular hero. Yet here he was, elected to a position where his theories concerning revolutions and minorities would be put to the test.

### III

As he approached his new high office, he entered upon the third phase of the radical's inevitable sequence: he became a spiritual solitary. At the head of any organization the radical is always lonely enough. But in Lincoln's case there was a special element that counted for loneliness. He was to carry his point—if he carried it—by waging a war. Not

only that. He was to wage a war for what, after all, was an unpopular cause. Roughly speaking, almost half of the voters in the North had disavowed his stand on the slavery question. Those who did adhere to him were of all shades of confidence and doubt. Now that he was to grapple with the problem, they felt utterly detached. "Poor Old Abe!" they sighed before he went to Washington to be inaugurated. "He has a tough job on his hands." As though it were not their job, too!

So what he had been in personal idea he now became in official fact: the lone head of a revolution—against human slavery—in the course of which he had to suppress a minority—the South. Those who were to come after him might devise all sorts of ingenious explanations to account for the Civil War, but he and the South had a perfect understanding on the matter. They were to decide whether slavery was to go or to stay.

But he was in a position to be perfectly misunderstood by all the various grades of his adherents in the North. In such a position as his, the true radical—not the mere conservative with a bad digestion—must feel his own way. He must constantly test out every path without losing his general direction. The people, unaccustomed to taking the long view, stick to every bypath as if it were the road to heaven. They want to think in well-rounded little categories. If through stress they are forced to adopt a new point of view—as in going from peace to war—they go body and soul, with no debatable ground, with no regard for the nice discriminations in thinking that in their total effect might some day reclaim the world. Persons accustomed to disinterested reflection may weigh matters, may be long in doubt, and finally decide that, everything considered, their country should engage in war. The unthinking politicians shake the heavens with their denunciation of the thinkers. The war comes. The politicians again shake the heavens with their denunciation of the thinkers—but this time because the thinkers dare to doubt that the enemy country cooks the grease out of its own dead soldiers to oil cannon with!

Lincoln had never hoped for the upheaval. He knew, as every thoughtful person must know, that the Civil War was one of the stupidest errors to which mankind has ever fallen a victim. But the time when it might have been avoided was long before Lincoln came to the front of the scene. By his time, there was an inevitability in events—and especially in feelings. Smaller minds jumped from one little whirlwind of an idea to another, and for the time found each one of them a complete explanation of the state of affairs. Lincoln was sensitive to the vague but unmistakable sweep of the times. Circumstances, he believed, had developed to the point where the only way out

to anything better than destruction was the way of the sword. But he did not wish to use the sword so that when he had cut his way through he would find himself on the road to destruction, after all. Revolutions, he knew, had a way of departing from old lines and old laws. He must go warily on an unbroken path.

So came the holocaust of the most cruel censure a great leader has ever endured. Why not let the South go? Did he not know that a nation could not be held together by force? But if he let the South go, slavery would be more firmly established in it than ever. And the slave South, a nation in itself, would be pushed up close against the Union of the North, and would be a constant menace to free institutions. What advantage would there be in that to a man who believed slavery wrong?

But why not give the South a chance to come back? He was ready. But he knew that the South would have to come back under the presidency of a man who stood at least for slavery's "ultimate extinction"; and he had too much of the Southerner's blood in his own veins ever to expect his contemporary slaveholders to come back peaceably on such a basis. He could with perfect candor reply to Horace Greeley: "What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help save the Union." For the one matter that lay behind all thought of disunion was this slave question. Had it by some sublime necromancy been settled, the Union would have been saved automatically. And the Union was now going to be saved only when his revolution against slavery became an accepted fact. Those who knew him slightly thought he was weak. But he was flexible adamant.

If he had possessed the services of one such general in 1861 as Robert E. Lee, the war might reasonably have been over within a year. The South, so hopelessly in the minority, might have been forced to accept the doctrine of "ultimate extinction"; it might have been forced to accept Lincoln's pet scheme of "compensated emancipation." In any event, he would be winning his revolution against slavery. But he had to pass through the agony of trying out generals. In the long deferred hope that he might find one who could fight, he became over-anxious and unwittingly prolonged the agony by his failure sometimes to distinguish between the function of the statesman and the function of the general.

He became the most solitary figure in the western world. Whether he looked abroad or scrutinized the landscape immediately about him, he found himself alone. In England and France men of official influence hoped the South would be victorious. It was as much, perhaps, as should have been expected of Napoleon III. He was ambitious to extend

his little influence; he thought the war between the states had definitely brought to an end anything that George Washington ever did; and he could now see no good reason why France in her own interest—that is to say, in his—should not “act accordingly,” and gather up a little of the wreckage. But one might have hoped for more at the hands of an England in which Victoria and Gladstone and Lord John Russell figured so prominently—or might one? In any event, official England failed to champion Lincoln’s cause. Early a few European friends like Count Agenor de Gasparin sought to enlighten England as well as France. But they were slow in producing official effect.

In his own country he was so much doubted that it is puzzling to find him able to carry on a war at all. The names he accumulated—not in the South, be it remembered, but in the North—afford a preliminary index to the esteem in which he was held: “Black Republican,” “Black abolitionist,” “renegade,” “sectionalist,” “radical,” “agitator,” “traitor,” “revolutionist,” “insurrectionist,” “blatherskite,” “visionary,” “scoundrel,” “slaughterhouse Abe,” “despot,” “usurper,” “felon,” “murderer,” “dirty-minded story teller,” “old gorilla,” “nigger-hugger,” and a long list not yet considered printable in any country. His way was precarious enough, however one looked at it. In the autumn of 1862—soon after the Emancipation Proclamation was made public—an Indiana politician, writing confidentially to Senator Henry S. Lane about state and national politics, predicted that if things went on as they were going, “every state in the Union will go Democratic at the next presidential election. Mark what I say.”

He could, by resorting to compulsion, command enough forces to carry on his war. But he was always surrounded by great concentric rings of skeptics. His own presidential family contained men who habitually spoke of him with contempt. The city of Washington, from members of Congress to dressmakers who made costumes for the President’s wife, was an ant hill of gossip about Old Abe’s predicament. One circle farther removed, the officers in the army, in considerable percentage were nasty in their condemnation; and men deserted the ranks in unbelievable numbers. In the great outlying regions of the country, all sorts of men and women to whom his fight should have made appeal were either in an uproar about him or in a conspiracy against him.

Why did he not stop the insults of England and France by declaring war? Why did he not exhibit a little decision? Why did he not exhibit some of the other qualities of a leader? Even such a high-minded patriot as Charles Eliot Norton had not yet found him much of anything except woefully deficient. Norton wished Seward had been

elected; he doubted whether Lincoln had a soul "open to the heats of enthusiasm for a great principle"; he saw the spectacle of "great historic deeds being accomplished, and moral principles working out their results, without one great man to do the deeds or to manifest the principle in himself." At one time he thought that unless Lincoln remade his cabinet before other military reverses came, it would be time to consider a "Committee of Safety"!

Just as many railed at him for bleeding the country to death. Why could he not be reasonable? Why did he not make peace? Had not somebody said that the South had been ready for peace all the while? Alert to every possibility to break down the North's morale, the South kept as many of these peace decoys aloft as possible. And the enemies behind the lines in the North accepted them all as very live white doves. Copperhead societies sang damnation. The *Copperhead Minstrel*, the volume of anti-Administration songs distributed throughout the country from New York City in 1863, assured Lincoln that they were coming

With curses loud and deep,  
That will haunt you in your waking,  
And disturb you in your sleep.

The entire volume was scornful enough to satisfy the most vociferous Lincoln hater of the day, and is quite incomprehensible to the Lincoln follower of the twentieth century. To the tune of "America," "patriotic families every night" were asked to sing a song beginning:

God save our wretched land  
From Lincoln's traitor band,  
From woe and blight.

And ending:

Down with the traitor band,  
The pale-faced contraband—  
White negro-knaves;  
Up with the banner bright  
Of liberty and right  
God gave to people white,  
But not to slaves.

To the tune of "Lord Lovel" they sang:

Then he sent for Seward and Simon the thief,  
And Welles and Bates and Blair,  
To these trusty old traitors, Abe Lincoln, he said,  
In my new nigger kingdom you'll share—share—share,  
In my new nigger kingdom you'll share.

And they sang every other kind of defiance and insolence:

But crack your low jokes, Massa Lincoln,  
Only white men to ruin are hurled,  
So put your foot down, Massa Lincoln,  
And trample them out of the world.

Honest Old Abe, when the war first began  
Denied abolition was part of his plan;  
Honest Old Abe has since made a decree  
The war must go on till the slaves are all free.  
As both can't be honest, will some one tell how,  
If honest Abe then, he is honest Abe now?

From New York also emanated the publications of the *Metropolitan Record*, a press pledged to fight "fanaticism in every form." In *The Trial of Abraham Lincoln*, Lincoln was charged, in nine counts, with "treasonable intent, purposes, and designs." To the witness stand were called Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Jackson, Hancock, Patrick Henry, Webster, Clay, and other statesmen of the past. And they all testified against Lincoln. After the testimony, before the verdict was rendered, a great procession of the horribly disfigured, the maimed, the destitute, and the starving victims of Lincoln's "fanaticism" filed past and shrieked in agony at the defendant. Then the Spirit of the Constitution pronounced judgment, in the course of which he declared: "You have been given the opportunity of saving a nation, but you have stabbed it to the heart. . . . To the outraged justice of your countrymen I now leave you, with the brand of 'Tyrant' upon your brow."

The country was alive with societies—or one society under many names—designed to thwart the efforts of the President. The Knights of the Golden Circle, the Sons of Liberty, the Order of American Knights, zealously stirred up riots against the draft. They wrote letters to their neighbors in the Union army and urged them to desert—and with effect. They managed to keep in touch with Confederate authorities and receive directions from them. They helped to publish pamphlets designed to discredit everything Lincoln attempted. With more or less secrecy they carried on military drill in anticipation of "the great day"—a membership estimated at from 340,000 to 1,000,000. They nurtured a great conspiracy to free the Confederate prisoners-of-war confined in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. If these soldiers were unable to establish a new sister confederacy in these states, they were to return to the South and replenish the depleted armies. Confederate workers were con-

stantly filtering down from Canada and giving encouragement to every disloyal heart.

Although Lincoln never knew on one day what friend would desert him on the next, he went his way, ever clarifying his mind in mystic communion, ever feeling ahead sensitively. They might say he had no policy if they liked; they might condemn him for having done this or not having done that; they might be tardy in inviting him to speak at Gettysburg; they might say that his manner was uncouth and his writing without style; they might—the irresponsible among them—circulate whatever lies they chose about his having been drunk on the White House lawn, having been obscene, having gone crazy. When the whole bloody business was over, there would be at least one man who would approve what he had done—the man down inside Abraham Lincoln.

In this lonely yet adequate assurance, he gave himself to the bearing of other people's burdens. He studied the cases of young boyish deserters in the army and prevented the execution of many. He heard the tearful recitals of countless widows. He heard the grievances of men wounded in battle for his ideal. He hurried back and forth between the White House and the War Department throughout the hours of every battle, and suffered with the wounded and the dying, whoever they were. "What news, my friends, what news?" he asked expectantly of the brother-in-law and sister-in-law of General Lew Wallace, as he strode into the War Department in the last hours of the battle of Shiloh. "Oh," the sister-in-law exclaimed, with a sense of relief in her voice, "we heard that a General Wallace was among the killed, and we were afraid it was *our* Wallace. But it was not."

"Ah-h-h," he replied, looking down into her face with sad eyes, "but it was *somebody's* Wallace."

Nor was his lot much less lonely after the Union armies had begun to win. The people were tired of battles. In the early days when battles were lost everybody said, "Why doesn't Old Abe make them fight?" When he had found Grant and Sherman, everybody said, "Why doesn't Old Abe stop the awful carnage?" The people, too, were tired of hearing about negroes. What did anybody want with them now that they were free? Would Old Abe be good enough to find the answer? It was not easy. Carlyle was not only humorous but wise when he said: "The South says to the nigger, 'God bless you! and be a slave,' and the North says, 'God damn you! and be free.'"

Not even the clear assurance that Grant could not be made to run against him in 1864, not even the growing conviction that with battles won by his generals he would be reelected, not even the good omens of

every sort that daily came into view, could silence the great minority. The national convention of the opposition party was the occasion for an incidental ingathering of every kind of hater and plotter and conspirator. The free lances were out to rid the country of "tyranny." On the convention floor, if the proceedings were accurately reported, the same spirit prevailed. "They might search hell over," a delegate from Ohio declared, "and they could not find a worse President than Abraham Lincoln." Another proclaimed: "For less offenses than Mr. Lincoln has been guilty of, the English people chopped off the head of the first Charles." And still another, forerunner of the twentieth-century maker of slogans: "The people will soon rise, and if they cannot put Lincoln out of power by the ballot, they will by the bullet. (Loud cheers.)"

When the people returned him to power, he breathed an easy breath. He breathed another when he saw the end of the war only a few days ahead. Confronted with the somewhat less harrowing task of nursing a wounded nation through convalescence, he dared to hope for a little serenity. But the downward tug of his lower lip and the wistful inquiry in his gray eyes told how he would have welcomed some understanding hearts. When the news of his assassination was flashed over the country, not even the tragic manner of his going could jar the doubt—or the hatred—from the minds of tens of thousands who should have caught the spirit of his benevolent dictatorship. Senator and Mrs. Henry S. Lane, when they received the news, went down to the business section of their little Indiana town to tell as many as possible what had happened. On the way they met the pastor of the Presbyterian Church and sorrowfully broke the news to him. He was startled; but upon second thought, he believed it was providential. Lincoln had to be got out of the way so that a stronger man might grapple with the problem of reconstruction. The same morning, in an Ohio village where the same year another Republican President of the United States was born, a crowd had assembled to learn the news. When it was announced that the President had died that morning, a part of the crowd threw up their hats and shouted and went away and killed a turkey and had a celebration. "Now we'll leave the damned nigger where he belongs, and get back to the Constitution!"

The radical who had pitied the lowliest of his fellow mortals with a great love, and who early dreamed of a revolution that would set them free in an undivided American Union, had had his fling at making his contemporaries understand an ideal.

"Victory comes late."



# Wilson's Failure

STEFAN ZWEIG (1881- )

Like André Maurois, Franz Werfel, Thomas Mann, Jules Romains, Lion Feuchtwanger, and Alfred Einstein, Stefan Zweig is a distinguished European now living in exile in America. Born in Vienna of Jewish parentage, he was educated in the best European tradition, and as a university student had already published two volumes of verse influenced by Hofmannsthal, Rilke, and Verlaine. Until the World War Zweig traveled much and wrote verse, short stories, and literary criticism. As a traveler he moved about in Europe, Great Britain, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Asia, and Africa. He became the intimate friend and disciple of the Belgian poet Émile Verhaeren, whose works he translated and interpreted for German-speaking peoples. Charles Vildrac and Georges Duhamel were other literary friends of this period. Zweig's world was completely shattered by the outbreak of the World War. An ardent pacifist, he associated himself with Romain Rolland and others of like opinions who sought shelter in Switzerland. Rolland became one of the great inspirations of Zweig's career.

After the war he settled in Salzburg and devoted himself to an ambitious program of writing which soon raised him to a conspicuous position in European letters. Always an idealist and an internationalist, he became a militant advocate of liberalism and tolerance. The greater part of his post-war writing, however, has been in the field of biography. His work has been translated into many languages, and his reputation has outdistanced even his own extended travels.

Some critics prefer his novels and short stories to his biographical writings. His work in fiction includes *Conflicts* (1927), *Amok* (1931), *The Buried Candelabrum* (1937), and *Beware of Pity* (1939). In the theatre he is best known for *Joseph* (1922), a pacifistic play in which the element of Judaism is very strong, and *Volpone, a Loveless Comedy* (1928), adapted from Ben Jonson's Elizabethan play. His version of *Volpone* was widely successful in European theatres and, translated by Ruth Langner, was presented in New York by the Theatre Guild in 1928. But Zweig's international reputation is based primarily upon his biographical studies. Portraits of Casanova, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Balzac, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Hölderlin, Kleist, Nietzsche, Mesmer, Mrs. Eddy, and Freud are included in *Adepts in Self-Portraiture* (1928), *Three Masters* (1930), *Mental Healers* (1932), and *Master Builders* (1939). Other biographies, separately published, include *Paul Verlaine* (1913), *Émile Verhaeren* (1914), *Romain Rolland* (1921), *Joseph Fouché* (1930), *Marie Antoinette* (1933), *Erasmus of Rotterdam* (1934), *Mary*,

*Queen of Scotland and the Isles* (1935), and *Conqueror of the Seas: The Story of Magellan* (1938). *The Tide of Fortune* (1940), "twelve historical miniatures," combines history, biography, and portraiture.

In *Master Builders*, which gathers into one huge volume twelve of his sketches, Zweig wrote, "I am trying to analyze the distinctive types of the creative will, and to illustrate these various types by a description of personalities characteristic of each." The deductive method which he has used is implied in this statement. His critics have often pointed to the limitations of such a method and to Zweig's tendency to illustrate a thesis rather than reveal the character for its own sake. But the force of his imaginative reconstructions no critic has denied. *Master Builders* recalls in many ways the methods of Bradford's "psychographs." The sketches are not full biographies; Zweig has sought, as he says, "a sublimation, a condensation, an essence." He tends to be an essayist and critic employing a psychological method, exposing very fully his interpretation of the inner lives of his subjects, with a very full commentary.

In both his fiction and his biography Zweig has been deeply influenced by a fellow-Viennese, Sigmund Freud. There are echoes also of the ideas of another psychologist of the sub-conscious, Carl Gustav Jung, whose *Psychologische Typen* (1921) has influenced Zweig's classification of "types of the creative will" in his "typology of the spirit," as he calls *Master Builders*. In biography Zweig usually prefers to treat characters of a particular sort, rebels, revolutionists in one sphere or another—the "*temperament demoniaque*." The preferences natural to his temperament and his preoccupation with Freudianism lead to a very romantic exaltation of instinct.

The most characteristic of Zweig's portraits are too long for inclusion in such a book as this. The editors have chosen a shorter sketch from *The Tide of Fortune*, an account of a fateful hour in history and of the central actor in it. From "Wilson's Failure" emerges a clear picture of a democratic leader, an idealist, confronted by recalcitrant facts, bent by them, and finally broken by his compromise with them. It is a picture of a character under test-circumstances of the most cruel urgency, a mingling of history and characterization, with all the drama and vigor of Zweig at his best.

ON DECEMBER 13, 1918, the great steamship *George Washington* reached Brest, having on board Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America. Never since the beginning of the world had any vessel, any man, been awaited by so many millions and with such ardent hopes. Four long years had the nations been at grips one with another, slaughtering hundreds of thousands of their finest sons with

From *The Tide of Fortune*, by Stefan Zweig, copyright 1936, 1940. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York. The translation is by Eden and Cedar Paul.

rifles and bayonets, machine-guns and heavy artillery, flame-throwers and poison gas; and throughout these four years they had volleyed hatred against one another. Nevertheless, this frantic excitement had never completely silenced the muted voices from within, which told them that what they did and what they said was absurd, insane, a dishonour to our century. The millions of combatants had all the time been animated, consciously or unconsciously, by the inward knowledge that mankind had slipped back into the chaos of a barbarism supposedly left behind for ever.

Then from across the Atlantic, from the New World, had come a voice speaking clearly athwart the still blood-drenched battlefields to say: "No more war." Never again must there be such discords; never again should there be the old and wicked secret diplomacy whereby the nations had been marshalled to the massacre without their knowledge or consent. Instead there would be established a new, a better world order, "the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind." Wonderful to relate, in every country and in every language the voice had instantly been understood. War, which yesterday had been a futile wrestling for territories, for frontiers, for raw materials and markets, for minerals and petroleum, had suddenly acquired a higher, an almost religious significance; had assumed the aspect of a preliminary to perpetual peace, to the Messianic realm of right and of humanity. All at once it seemed as if the blood of the millions had, after all, not been shed in vain; as if this one generation had only suffered that never again should such sorrow be visited upon our earth. By hundred of thousands, by millions, the voices of those who had become inspired with a frenzy of trust appealed to this one man, Woodrow Wilson, in the hope that he could establish peace between victors and vanquished, that the peace should be a just peace. Wilson, like another Moses, would bring to the war-maddened peoples the tables of a new league. Within a few weeks his name had acquired a religious, a redemptive significance. Streets and buildings and children were named after him. Every nation that was troubled or disadvantaged sent delegates. Letters and telegrams, filled with proposals, requests, and conjurations, deluged him from each of the five continents. They were numbered by thousands upon thousands, so that trunks filled with them were brought to the ship upon which he sailed for Europe. Nay, the whole world came to regard him as the arbiter who would settle its final quarrels before the achievement of the long-desired reconciliation.

Wilson could not resist the call. His friends in America advised him against attending the Peace Conference in person. As President of the

United States, they said, duty demanded that he should not leave his country, and should be content to guide the negotiations from afar. But Woodrow Wilson rejected the counsel. Even the highest office his native land could confer, the Presidency, seemed a trifle when compared with the task that awaited him on the other side of the Atlantic. He was not content with serving one people, one continent; he wished to serve mankind at large, to devote himself, not to this one moment of time, but to the future welfare of the world. He would not narrow his aims to promoting the interests of America, for "interest does not bind men together, interest separates men." No, he would work for the advantage of all. In his own person, he felt, he must see to it that not again should soldiers and diplomatists (whose passing-bell would be rung by one who could ensure the future of mankind) have a chance of inflaming national passions. In his own person he would ensure that "the will of the people rather than of their leaders" should prevail. Every word spoken at the Peace Conference (to be the last of its kind in the world) should be spoken with the doors and windows wide open, and should echo round the globe.

Thus he stood on board the ship and gazed at the European coast which loomed through the mist, vague and formless like his own dream of the coming brotherhood of nations. He stood upright, tall of stature, firm of countenance, his eyes sharp and clear behind his spectacles, his chin prominent like that of other energetic Americans, lips full and fleshy but reserved. Son and grandson of Presbyterian pastors, he had inherited both the strength and the narrowness of those for whom there is only one truth and who are confident that they know it. He had the ardour of all his pious Scottish and Irish ancestors, conjoined with the zealotry given by that Calvinist creed which imposes upon leaders and teachers the task of saving mankind from sin; and incessantly there worked in him the obstinacy of heretics and martyrs who would go to the stake rather than yield a jot of what they conceived themselves to have learned from the Bible. For him, the democrat, the man of learning, the concepts "humanity," "mankind," "liberty," "freedom," "human rights," were no empty words, but articles of faith which he would defend syllable by syllable as his forefathers had defended the Gospel. Many battles had he fought. Now, as the ship drew nearer to the coast of Europe and the outlines grew more distinct, he was approaching the land where the decisive issue was to be faced. Involuntarily he tensed his muscles, determined "to fight for the new order, agreeably if we can, disagreeably if we must."

Soon, however, the rigidity faded from the countenance of one whose gaze was directed into the distance. The guns and banners which

greeted him as he steamed into Brest harbour were not only thundering and waving a formal welcome to the President of the United States, an allied republic, for from the masses on the shore came shouts of acclamation which voiced something more than a prearranged, an organized reception, something more than prescribed jubilation. What greeted him was the flaming enthusiasm of a whole people. As he sat in the train speeding toward the metropolis, from every village, every hamlet, every house, flags waved and hopes radiated. Hands were stretched toward him, cheers acclaimed him. Then, as he drove up the Champs-Élysées, cascades of the same enthusiasm were pouring down the living walls. The people of Paris, the people of France, symbolizing all the distant peoples of Europe, were shouting, were rejoicing, were overflowing with expectancy. More and more did his features relax. A free, a happy, an almost entrancing smile disclosed his teeth. He waved his hat to right and to left, as if wishing to greet them all, to greet the whole world. Assuredly he had done well to come in person, for only the living will can triumph over the rigidity of law. So happy a town, so hopeful a populace—how could he fail to fulfill their wishes now and for all time? A night's rest, and on the morrow he would get promptly to work, giving the world that peace of which it had dreamed for thousands of years, thus doing the greatest deed that any mortal had ever done.

In front of the palace which the French government had got ready for him, in the passages of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in front of the Hôtel Crillon, the headquarters of the American delegation, the journalists (an army in themselves) were athrong with impatience. A hundred and fifty of them had come from America alone; every country, every important town had sent a representative of the press, and these knights of the pen were eagerly demanding cards of entry to every sitting—yes, to every sitting of the Conference. Had not the world been assured that there would be "complete publicity"? This time there were to be no secret meetings, no secret conclaves. Word for word ran the first sentence of the famous Fourteen Points: "Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind." The pestilence of secret treaties, which had caused more deaths than all other epidemics taken together, was to be definitively abolished by the new serum of Wilsonian "open diplomacy."

But the impetuous journalists were disappointed by encountering insuperable reserve. "Oh, yes, you will all be admitted to the big sittings." The reports of these public sittings (which would really have been purged beforehand of all possibilities of manifest tension) would be

given in full to the world. But no further information could be given as yet. The rules of procedure would have to be drawn up first. The peeved journalists could not fail to become aware that something rather inharmonious must be going on behind the scenes. Still, what they had been told was true enough. The rules of procedure were being drawn up. It was in connexion with this matter that President Wilson realized from the first utterance of the "Big Four" that the Allies were in league against him. They did not wish to put all their cards on the table—and for good reason. In the portfolios and pigeon-holes of all the belligerent nations were secret treaties which provided that each should get a "fair share" of the loot. In fact there was a good deal of dirty linen which it would be most indiscreet to wash in public. To avoid discrediting the Conference at the very outset, therefore, it would be essential to discuss these matters and have a preliminary "wash" behind closed doors. Besides, there were more deep-seated causes of disharmony than those which were concerned with mere rules of procedure. Each of the two groups was, within itself, clear enough and harmonious enough as to what it wanted: the Americans on one side, and the Europeans on the other. The Conference had to make, not one peace, but two. One of them was temporal, actual, to end the war against the Germans, who had laid down their arms. The other was problematical, eternal not temporal, being a peace designed to make war impossible for evermore. The temporal peace was to be harsh and merciless after the old pattern. The eternal peace was to be a new one, embodying the Wilsonian Covenant of the League of Nations. Which of the two was to be discussed first?

Here the two views came into sharp conflict. Wilson had little interest in the temporal peace. The outlining of the new frontiers, the payment of war indemnities or reparations, were, he considered, matters for experts and committees to decide in strict accordance with the principles laid down in the Fourteen Points. These were minor tasks, *parerga*, jobs for specialists. What the leading statesmen of all nations had to do was to get to work upon the new task of creation, to bring the countries together in unity, to establish perpetual peace. Each group was convinced of the extreme urgency of the peace it desired. The European Allies insisted, and justly, that it would never do to keep a world that had been exhausted and bled white by four years of war waiting many months to learn the conditions of peace. This would bring chaos upon Europe. First the pressing problems must be solved. The frontiers must be outlined, and the reparations specified; the men who were still under arms must be sent back to their wives and children; the currencies must be stabilized; trade and traffic must be

set agoing once more. After that, when the world had been steadied, it would be possible to allow the Fata Morgana of the Wilsonian schemes to shine tranquilly upon it. Just as Wilson was not really interested in the actual peace, so Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Sonnino, being adroit tacticians and very practical statesmen, were little interested in what Wilson aimed at. In part from political calculation, and in part from genuine sympathy with humanist demands and ideals, they had expressed a general approval of the proposed League of Nations, for, consciously or unconsciously, they had been stirred by the force of an unselfish principle that came from the very hearts of their respective nations, and were ready to discuss his plan, with certain mitigations and provisos of their own. But first the peace with Germany must be settled, to conclude the war; then only could the Covenant be discussed.

Wilson himself, however, was sufficiently practical to know that repeated procrastination can deprive a demand of its impetus. A man does not become President of the United States through idealism, and his own experience had taught him how dilatoriness in replying is a weapon whereby a vexatious heckler can be disarmed. For this reason he insisted unhesitatingly that the first matter to be considered was the elaboration of the Covenant, which would have to be incorporated word by word in the peace treaty with Germany. A second conflict inevitably resulted from this demand. The Allies' view was that the acceptance of such a method would involve the exculpation of Germany, though Germany, by her invasion of Belgium, had brutally defied international law, and at Brest-Litovsk had, with General Hoffmann's hammer-blow of the fist, given an atrocious example of ruthless dictatorship. Was she at this early stage to reap the unmerited reward of the coming humanitarianism? No, let debts be settled first in the old way, with hard cash. Then the new system could be introduced. Fields had been laid waste; towns had been battered to fragments. Let President Wilson inspect them. Then he would see that damages had to be made good. But Wilson, the "impractical man," deliberately looked beyond the ruins. His eyes were fixed on the future, and instead of the ruined buildings of today he could see only the edifice of the future. He had but one task, "to do away with an old order and establish a new one." Unflinchingly, stubbornly, he persisted in his demand, notwithstanding the protests of his own advisers, Lansing and House. The Covenant first. The Covenant first. Settle the affairs of mankind at large to begin with; then deal with the interests of particular peoples.

The struggle was arduous, and (this was disastrous) it consumed a great deal of time. Unfortunately Wilson had not, before crossing the Atlantic, given his dream a solid configuration. His project for the

Covenant was not definitive, was only a "first draft" which had to be discussed in countless sittings; had to be modified, improved, fortified—or toned down. Furthermore, courtesy demanded that, having come to Paris, he should as soon as possible visit the chief towns of the other Allies. Wilson crossed the Channel, went to London, spoke in Manchester, returned to the Continent, took train to Rome. Since during his absence the other statesmen did not devote their best energies to furthering the Covenant, more than a month was lost before the first "plenary session" could be held. Meanwhile in Hungary, Rumania, Poland, and the Baltic States, also on the Dalmatian frontier, regular troops and volunteers engaged in skirmishes and occupied territories, while in Vienna famine threatened and in Russia the situation was growing more and more alarming.

Even at this first "plenary session," held on January 18, 1919, no more was achieved than the formulating of a theoretical decision that the Covenant was to be "an integral part of the general treaty of peace." Still remaining nebulous, still amid interminable discussions, it wandered from hand to hand, was continually edited and re-edited. Another month passed—a month of terrible unrest for Europe, which more and more impetuously demanded a veritable peace. Not until February 14, 1919, more than three months after the armistice, was Wilson able to produce the Covenant in its definitive form, when it was unanimously adopted.

Once more the world was jubilant. Wilson's cause had triumphed. Henceforth the road to peace would not lead through warfare and terror, for peace was to be ensured by mutual agreement and by faith in the reign of law. He received an ovation as he left the palace. Once more, and for the last time, he contemplated with a proud, thankful, happy smile the crowd which had thronged thither to acclaim him. Behind this crowd he glimpsed other crowds, other peoples; behind this one generation which had suffered so intensely he could picture future generations, the generations of those who, thanks to the safeguard of the Covenant, would no longer feel the scourge of war, would no longer know the humiliation of dictatorships. It was the crowning day of his life, and the last of his happy days. For Wilson frustrated his own victory by triumphing prematurely, and quitting the battlefield without delay. On the morrow, February 15, he began the return voyage to America, where he would present his electors and fellow-countrymen with the Magna Charta of perpetual peace before coming back to Europe to sign the treaty that would close the last war.

Salutes were fired again as the *George Washington* steamed away from Brest, but the crowds that assembled to bid him farewell were



smaller and less enthusiastic than those which had greeted his arrival. By the time that Wilson left Europe the passionate tension had begun to relax, the Messianic hopes of the nations to subside. When he reached New York, his reception was likewise cool. No aeroplanes were soaring to greet the homeward-bound vessel; there were no storms of acclamation; and from the public offices, from Congress, from his own political party, from his fellow-citizens, the President received no more than a half-hearted welcome. Europe was dissatisfied because Wilson had not gone far enough; America, because he had gone too far. To Europe the linkage of conflicting interests into one great interest of mankind seemed inadequately accomplished. In America his political adversaries, who were already thinking of the next Presidential election, declared that without warrant he had attached the New World too closely to restless and incalculable Europe, thus running counter to the Monroe Doctrine, one of the basic principles of United States policy. Woodrow Wilson was imperatively reminded that his business as President was not to found a future realm of dreams, not to promote the welfare of foreign nations, but primarily to consider the advantage of the United States citizens who had elected him to represent their will. Wilson, therefore, though fatigued by his European negotiations, had now to undertake fresh discussions with the members of his own party and with his political opponents. Above all, he was mortified by a demand that there should be introduced into the splendid structure of the Covenant, which he had regarded as finished and inviolable, a back door of escape for his own country, the dangerous "provision for the withdrawal of America from the League." Thus, whereas he had fancied the edifice of the League of Nations firmly erected for all time, he now found that a breach was to be made in the wall, an ominous breach that would in time lead to a general collapse.

Despite limitations and corrections, in America as in Europe, Wilson was able to secure the acceptance of his Magna Charta of mankind. But it was only half a victory, and when he set sail once more for Europe to do the second half of his work as one of the leading members of the Peace Conference, it was no longer with the free-hearted and sublime self-satisfaction with which he had originally set out. Nor did he contemplate the coast of Europe in the same hopeful spirit. He had aged considerably during these weeks, was weary and disappointed. His face was pinched and strained; harsh and sour lines were forming round his mouth; occasionally twitching movements of the left cheek were visible. These were the heralds of the storm, signs of the oncoming illness which was soon to strike him down. The physician who accompanied him missed no chance of warning him against overstrain. A

fresh, perhaps even harder struggle awaited him. He knew it was more difficult to carry principles into effect than to formulate them in the abstract. But he was resolved that on no account would he sacrifice so much as a tittle of his programme. All or nothing. Perpetual peace, or no peace at all.

No ovation on landing, no ovation in the streets of Paris; the press was coldly expectant; people seemed dubious and mistrustful. Goethe's saying that enthusiasm is not adapted for prolonged storage was once more confirmed. Instead of striking the iron while it was hot and malleable, Wilson had allowed European idealism to grow cold and stiff. His one month's absence had changed everything. Lloyd George had simultaneously quitted the Conference. Clemenceau, having been wounded by a pistol bullet in an attempt on his life, had been laid up for a fortnight, and during this unguarded moment the advocates of private interests had seized the chance of forcing their way into the committee rooms. Most energetic and most dangerous were the soldiers. Marshals and generals, who for four years had been in the limelight, whose arbitrary decisions had been the law to hundreds of thousands, were by no means disposed to take a back seat now. A Covenant which would deprive them of their armies, since it was going "to abolish conscription and all other forms of compulsory military service," was a threat to their very existence. The tomfoolery about perpetual peace, this twaddling onslaught on their profession, must be abolished, or at least sidetracked. What they wanted was more armament instead of Wilsonian disarmament, new frontiers and material guarantees instead of the watchword of internationalism. Not by Fourteen Points written in the air would it be possible to safeguard a country, but only if that country multiplied its own defences and disarmed its adversaries. On the heels of the militarists came the representatives of the industrial groups; the munition-makers, who were also interested in armaments; the brokers, who hoped to make money out of reparations. Alert, too, were the diplomatists, each of whom, threatened in the back by the opposition parties, wanted to secure for his country a big area of newly annexed territory. A few adroit touches upon the keyboard of public opinion had resulted in all the European newspapers, ably seconded by those of America, voicing the same theme: "Wilson's fantastic schemes retard the peace settlement. His utopian plans—praiseworthy, of course, and most idealistic—check the consolidation of Europe. Don't let us squander any more time upon moral considerations and supermoral reveries. Unless peace is signed quickly, Europe will be in chaos once more."

Unhappily these complaints were justifiable. Wilson, who looked

ahead for centuries, had his own standards of measurement, which were different from those of the nations of contemporary Europe. Four or five months seemed to him very little time for a task which was to realize what had been a dream for thousands of years. But meanwhile in Eastern Europe volunteers organized by dark forces were marching hither and thither, occupying undefended territories, and whole regions did not know to whom they belonged or were going to belong. Though four months had slipped away, the German and Austrian delegations had not yet been received. On the other side of frontiers that were still vague, the peoples were growing restless; nor were signs lacking that in despair Hungary tomorrow and Germany the day after would probably outdo the Bolsheviks in the way of revolution. Let us settle matters quickly, urged the diplomats. To clear the ground we must sweep away whatever might be a hindrance—above all, this infernal Covenant.

A single hour in Paris was enough to show Wilson that all he had laboriously constructed in three months had been undermined during his month's absence, and was in danger of crashing to the ground. Marshal Foch had almost managed to arrange that the Covenant should be expunged from the peace treaty, and in that case the work of the first three months would be annihilated. But where decisive matters were at stake, Wilson could be adamant, and he would not budge an inch. Next day, March 15, he secured an official announcement in the press that the resolution of January 25 was still in force, and that "the Covenant is to be an integral part of the treaty of peace." This declaration was the first counter-thrust against the attempt to make the peace treaty with Germany, not upon the basis of the new Covenant, but upon that of the old secret treaties between the Allies. President Wilson was now fully enlightened. He knew that the very powers which had so recently declared themselves prepared to respect the peoples' right of self-determination really intended to make demands incompatible with such a right. France would claim the Rhineland and the Saar; Italy would claim Fiume and Dalmatia; Rumania, Poland, and Czechoslovakia would all want a share of the loot. Unless he armed for resistance, the peace would, as of old, be made in the way he had condemned, the way of Napoleon, Talleyrand, and Metternich; not in accordance with the principles he had advocated, and which the Allies had solemnly pledged themselves to observe.

A fortnight passed in fierce struggles. Wilson strongly opposed the cession of the Saar to France, feeling that this first infringement of the principle of self-determination would become a precedent for many more; and Italy, convinced that her own demands were implicit

in France's demand for the Saar, threatened to quit the Conference unless Wilson gave way. The French press began to raise a clamour; there had been an outbreak of Bolshevism in Hungary, and soon, said the Allies, the poison would spread to the West. Wilson was opposed even by his own advisers, Colonel House and Robert Lansing. Though they were his good friends, they urgently advised him, in view of the chaotic conditions that prevailed in Europe, to sacrifice a few of his idealistic aims in order that the other peace could be signed as speedily as possible. In fact, Wilson stood alone against a unanimously hostile front. From America he was attacked in the rear by public opinion, which was fanned by his political adversaries and rivals, and often enough Wilson felt he had reached the end of the tether. He admitted to a friend that he could not possibly continue to hold his own against all the others, and said that he had determined to leave the Conference unless he could carry his point.

While thus engaged against such heavy odds, he was laid low by an enemy from within. On April 3, when the fight between crude realities and a still unattained ideal was nearing its climax, he was unable to keep upright any longer, and—a man of sixty-three—had to take to his bed with influenza. The onslaughts from the outer world were even more formidable than those of his fevered blood, and gave him no rest. Catastrophic tidings came to hand. On April 5 the Communists rose to power in Bavaria, for a Soviet Republic was established in Munich. At any moment Austria, hunger-stricken and midway between a Bolshevik Bavaria and a Bolshevik Hungary, seemed likely to take the same course, and every additional hour of resistance might make this lone fighter Wilson responsible for the spread of red revolution. The invalid's adversaries would leave him no peace on his sick-bed. In the next room Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Colonel House were discussing matters, being all agreed that an end must be reached at any cost. The cost would have to be paid by Wilson with his demands and his ideals. His claim for a perpetual peace would have to stand over, since it was an obstacle to the more immediate need, that of an urgent settlement of the "real," the military, the material peace.

But Wilson, exhausted, a sick man, irritated by the clamour of the press, which blamed him for blocking the way to peace, forsaken by his own advisers, and deceived by the representatives of the other governments, still would not give way. He felt that he must keep his pledged word; that he would not have done his utmost on behalf of the peace the others so much wanted unless he brought it into harmony with the non-military, the lasting, the future peace, unless he continued to do his utmost on behalf of the "world federation" which was

the only thing that could really establish the perpetual peace of Europe. Hardly had he risen from his bed when he took a decisive step. On April 7 he sent a cablegram to the Navy Department in Washington: "What is the earliest possible date U.S.S. *George Washington* can sail for Brest, France, and what is probable earliest date of arrival Brest? President desires movements this vessel expedited." The same day the world was informed that President Wilson had cabled for the steamer by which he was to depart.

The news came like a thunderclap, whose meaning was instantly understood. All over the globe it became known that President Wilson was determined to oppose any peace settlement that should in the slightest degree infringe the principles of the Covenant, and had resolved to quit the Conference rather than yield. A fateful hour had struck, one which would for decades, for centuries, settle the destinies of Europe, of the world at large. If Wilson left the Conference table, the old order of society would collapse, chaos would begin—but perhaps it would be the chaos out of which a new star is born. Europe looked on impatiently. Would the other members of the Conference take such a responsibility? Would Wilson himself take it? A fateful hour.

A fateful hour. At the moment Wilson was still firmly resolved. He would not compromise; he would not yield; there should not be "a hard peace," but "the just peace." The French should not have the Saar; the Italians should not have Fiume; Turkey should not be partitioned; there should be no "bartering of peoples." Right should prevail over might, the ideal over the real, the future over the present. *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*. This brief hour would be the greatest, the most perfectly human, the most heroic in Wilson's life. If only he should have courage to stand firm, his name would be immortalized among the rare true lovers of mankind, and he would have done an unexampled deed. But the hour was followed by a week, and during this week he was assailed from all sides. The French, the British, the Italian press attacked him—him, *εἰρηνοποιός*, the peace-maker—for destroying the peace by his theoretico-theological obstinacy, and for sacrificing the real world to a private utopia. Even Germany, which had looked to him as the main source of help but had been alarmed by the outbreak of Bolshevism in Bavaria, now turned against him. So did his fellow-countrymen. Colonel House and Lansing adjured him to give way. Even Wilson's private secretary, Tumulty, who a few days before had encouragingly cabled: "Only a bold stroke by the President will save Europe and perhaps the world," now, when Wilson was making the "bold stroke," was much perturbed, and cabled again: "Withdrawal

most unwise and fraught with most dangerous possibilities here and abroad. . . . President should place the responsibility for a break of the Conference where it properly belongs. . . . A withdrawal at this time would be a desertion."

Harassed, almost desperate, and with his self-confidence impaired by the universality of dissent, Wilson looked around. No one sided with him, everyone in the Conference hall was against him—even the members of his own staff; and the voices of the invisible millions upon millions, who from a distance were imploring him to be firm, to abide by his own principles, did not reach his ears. He never realized that if he should act as he had threatened, and withdraw from the Conference, his name would be immortalized; but that only if he was steadfast would he bequeath his idea to the future as a postulate to be perpetually renewed. He had no inkling what creative energy would issue from his saying "No" to the forces of greed, hatred, and unreason. All he could feel was that he was alone, and that he was too weak to shoulder the responsibility. The disastrous upshot was that President Wilson became less stubbornly resistant, while Colonel House built a bridge on which he could make compromises. The bargaining about the frontiers went on for a week. At length, on April 15, 1919—a black day in history—with a heavy heart and an uneasy conscience, Wilson agreed to the considerably abated militarist demands of Clemenceau. The Saar was not to become permanently French, but only for fifteen years. The first compromise was made by the man who had hitherto been uncompromising, and thereupon, as if a magician's wand had been waved, the tone of the Parisian press was utterly different next morning. The newspapers, which the day before had railed at him as a disturber of the peace, as a man who was ruining the world, extolled him as the wisest of living statesmen. But this praise seared him like a reproach. At the bottom of his soul Wilson knew that though he had perhaps saved the peace, the temporal peace, the permanent peace in a spirit of reconciliation, the only peace that could save the world had been lost or thrown away. Folly had overcome good sense; passion had prevailed against reason. Man had been thrust back into an evil past. He, who had been the leader and banner-bearer in the advance toward an ideal that should transcend time, had lost the supreme battle, in which he needed first of all to conquer his own weakness.

Did Wilson act rightly or wrongly in this fateful hour? Who can tell? At any rate, on a momentous and irrevocable day, he made a decision whose fruit will outlast decades and centuries, and which we and our descendants will have to pay for with our blood, our despair, our impotence, and our destruction. From this day Wilson's power, which had

been morally unrivalled, was broken, his prestige and energy were annulled. He who makes one concession cannot stop there. A compromise inevitably leads to further compromises. Dishonour creates dishonour, force begets force. Peace, which Wilson had visioned as integral and lasting, remains fragmentary, transient and incomplete, because it was not fashioned in the sense of the future, was not moulded out of the spirit of humanity, was not constructed of the materials of pure reason. A unique opportunity, perhaps the most fateful in history, was pitifully squandered, as the world, whose gods had been broken, soon realized in the bitterness of disappointment and confusion. When Wilson returned home, he who had been acclaimed as the saviour of the world was no longer regarded by anyone as a redeemer. He was nothing more than a weary and elderly invalid, doomed to a speedy death. Jubilation no longer greeted him, nor did flags wave at his coming. As the ship steamed away from the coast of Europe, he averted his face, for he could not look back at the unhappy continent which for thousands of years had longed for peace and unity and had never found them. Once again there vanished in the haze of distance the everlasting dream of a humanized world.

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# Florence Nightingale

LYTTON STRACHEY (1880-1932)

Both his accomplishments and his wide influence make Lytton Strachey one of the major figures in the history of English biography. He has been called the father of modern biography, the founder of a new school. Most of the methods he employs are not new to biographical writing, it is true; but the peculiar excellences which distinguish his best work have assuredly had too few earlier incarnations.

Strachey was born in 1880, son of Sir Richard and Lady Jane Strachey. His father was an able general and Indian administrator; his mother was an author and one of the most brilliant women of her time. Of his five brothers and sisters, three are in the British *Who's Who*, one of them being principal of Newnham College, Cambridge University. St. Loe Strachey, late author and editor of the London *Spectator*, father of the writer John Strachey, was his cousin. Educated in France and at Trinity College, Cambridge, he owes much to both Gallic and English cultural traditions. At Cambridge he distinguished himself as a poet but soon turned to prose, contributing occasionally to the reviews after his graduation. *Landmarks of French Literature* (1912), his first book, written for the "Home University Library," established him as an authoritative critic and revealed the lucid, ironic Stracheyan style already fully developed. Like most of his later work, this book was written in retirement in the country; Strachey was never able to work well amidst the innumerable social distractions of London.

Physically unfit for war service, Strachey devoted the war years mainly to research and writing. When the war ended, bringing its inevitable aftermath of disillusionment and skepticism, he was among those who struck most clearly the dominant note of the times. Oddly enough, he had difficulty finding a publisher for *Eminent Victorians* (1918), but it became enormously successful and influential because of its finished art and its ironic and challenging tone. *Queen Victoria* (1921) was even more successful. Again Strachey stripped off the heavy coats of whitewash encrusting the monumental figures of the Victorian past. The Queen herself emerged as a figure limited in intellect and temperament, an embodiment of bourgeois virtues who was empress of the vastest dominions ever ruled under a single crown—a paradoxical figure, but curiously appealing and human. *Books and Characters* (1922), sketches and reviews mainly on eighteenth-century figures, and *Pope* (1926), a brilliant lecture on the "wasp of Twickenham," whom Strachey was so well qualified to understand, moved backward in time from the Victorian era. *Elizabeth and Essex* (1928) moved still further



backward, to the sixteenth century, and was more romantic, less ironic, than earlier studies. Here Strachey tries to catch the drama of a great tragic story and the crowded pageantry of one of England's most colorful eras. The subject is less suited to his pen than that of *Victoria. Portraits in Miniature* (1931), which attempts to distil the essence of personality in short compass, and *Characters and Commentaries* (1933), critical and historical essays, complete the list of Strachey's important writings. One other project, the first complete, unexpurgated text of the famous *Greville Memoirs, 1814-60*, edited with Roger Fulford, was interrupted by Strachey's death in 1932 and remained unpublished until 1938.

During his active years Strachey was one of a brilliant circle, "the Bloomsbury group," living near Gordon Square in London. These friends included Virginia Woolf, novelist and essayist; Leonard Woolf, editor and publisher; J. M. Keynes, the noted economist; Clive Bell, the art critic; and Vanessa Bell, the artist. Max Beerbohm, off in Rapallo, Italy, was another of his many friends. Seen together, Beerbohm and Strachey would have been striking contrasts. Strachey was a tall, gangling, very thin man with a striking red beard, with the pallor of the study on his brow, and with great heavy spectacles over deep-set eyes; Beerbohm is short, rubicund, "cherubic," dandified.

In the preface to *Eminent Victorians*, Strachey says:

The art of biography seems to have fallen on evil times in England . . . With us, the most delicate and humane of all the branches of the art of writing has been relegated to the journeymen of letters; we do not reflect that it is perhaps as difficult to write a good life as to live one. Those two fat volumes, with which it is our custom to commemorate the dead—who does not know them, with their ill-digested masses of material, their slipshod style, their tone of tedious panegyric, their lamentable lack of selection, of detachment, of design? They are as familiar as the *cortège* of the undertaker and wear the same air of slow, funereal barbarism. One is tempted to suppose, of some of them, that they were composed by that functionary, as the final item of his job . . . How many lessons are to be learnt from them! But it is hardly necessary to particularise. To preserve, for instance, a becoming brevity—a brevity which excludes everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant—that, surely, is the first duty of the biographer. The second, no less surely, is to maintain his own freedom of spirit. It is not his business to be complimentary; it is his business to lay bare the facts of the case, as he understands them. That is what I have aimed at in this book—to lay bare the facts of some cases as I understand them, dispassionately, impartially, and without ulterior intentions. To quote the words of a Master—"Je n'impose rien; je ne propose rien; j'expose."

These lines are enough in themselves to explain the importance of Strachey in recent biographical writing. He sweeps aside the heavy "commemorative" writers of the "Life and Times" and "Life and Letters" tradition. He insists upon the brevity which arises from artistic

selection of significant detail; selection should be determined by a realistic "interpretation" of the character, arrived at through a detached examination of the facts. He insists upon style and architectural design. Biography is not compilation; it is, he insists, art. His works are the commentary on his text. As a writer of the "well made" play gives formal pattern to the whole drama and its component acts and scenes, so Strachey reveals the design implicit in the whole and in the parts of his "lives." As a stylist, he knows the art which conceals art; the clear stream of his prose moves rhythmically and sparkles with wit, irony, paradox, imagery. He is a master of *le mot juste*. He selects and interprets, suppressing the irrelevant (his critics, it is true, have sometimes differed with him on the issue of relevance). He is skeptical of accepted legends (as in "Florence Nightingale"). One more gift Strachey has—that of the creative artist who can summon men from the past and give them form and breath and motion again. Very fittingly, he found his audience in a period of post-war disillusionment when fact-facing and veil-stripping, the challenging of convention and optimism, seemed more than ever the duty of all right-thinking men; but he brought to the practice of biography a method and point of view which will be permanent in value and influence.

EVERYONE KNOWS THE POPULAR CONCEPTION of Florence Nightingale. The saintly, self-sacrificing woman, the delicate maiden of high degree who threw aside the pleasures of a life of ease to succour the afflicted, the Lady with the Lamp, gliding through the horrors of the hospital at Scutari, and consecrating with the radiance of her goodness the dying soldier's couch—the vision is familiar to all. But the truth was different. The Miss Nightingale of fact was not as facile fancy painted her. She worked in another fashion, and towards another end; she moved under the stress of an impetus which finds no place in the popular imagination. A Demon possessed her. Now demons, whatever else they may be, are full of interest. And so it happens that in the real Miss Nightingale there was more that was interesting than in the legendary one; there was also less that was agreeable.

Her family was extremely well-to-do, and connected by marriage with a spreading circle of other well-to-do families. There was a large country house in Derbyshire; there was another in the New Forest; there were Mayfair rooms for the London season and all its finest parties; there were tours on the Continent with even more than the usual number of Italian operas and of glimpses at the celebrities of Paris. Brought up among such advantages, it was only natural to

From *Eminent Victorians*, by Lytton Strachey. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., publishers.

suppose that Florence would show a proper appreciation of them by doing her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her—in other words, by marrying, after a fitting number of dances and dinner-parties, an eligible gentleman, and living happily ever afterwards. Her sister, her cousins, all the young ladies of her acquaintance, were either getting ready to do this or had already done it. It was inconceivable that Florence should dream of anything else; yet dream she did. Ah! To do her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her! Assuredly she would not be behindhand in doing her duty; but unto what state of life *had* it pleased God to call her? That was the question. God's calls are many, and they are strange. Unto what state of life had it pleased Him to call Charlotte Corday, or Elizabeth of Hungary? What was that secret voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards . . . she hardly knew what but certainly towards something very different from anything around her? Why, as a child in the nursery, when her sister had shown a healthy pleasure in tearing her dolls to pieces, had *she* shown an almost morbid one in sewing them up again? Why was she driven now to minister to the poor in their cottages, to watch by sick-beds, to put her dog's wounded paw into elaborate splints as if it was a human being? Why was her head filled with queer imaginations of the country house at Embley turned, by some enchantment, into a hospital, with herself as matron moving about among the beds? Why was even her vision of heaven itself filled with suffering patients to whom she was being useful? So she dreamed and wondered, and, taking out her diary, she poured into it the agitations of her soul. And then the bell rang, and it was time to go and dress for dinner.

As the years passed, a restlessness began to grow upon her. She was unhappy, and at last she knew it. Mrs. Nightingale, too, began to notice that there was something wrong. It was very odd; what could be the matter with dear Flo? Mr. Nightingale suggested that a husband might be advisable; but the curious thing was that she seemed to take no interest in husbands. And with her attractions, and her accomplishments, too! There was nothing in the world to prevent her making a really brilliant match. But no! She would think of nothing but how to satisfy that singular craving of hers to be *doing* something. As if there was not plenty to do in any case, in the ordinary way, at home. There was the china to look after, and there was her father to be read to after dinner. Mrs. Nightingale could not understand it; and then one day her perplexity was changed to consternation and alarm. Florence announced an extreme desire to go to Salisbury Hospital for

several months as a nurse; and she confessed to some visionary plan of eventually setting up in a house of her own in a neighbouring village, and there founding "something like a Protestant Sisterhood, without vows, for women of educated feelings." The whole scheme was summarily brushed aside as preposterous; and Mrs. Nightingale, after the first shock of terror, was able to settle down again more or less comfortably to her embroidery. But Florence, who was now twenty-five and felt that the dream of her life had been shattered, came near to desperation.

And, indeed, the difficulties in her path were great. For not only was it an almost unimaginable thing in those days for a woman of means to make her own way in the world and to live in independence, but the particular profession for which Florence was clearly marked out both by her instincts and her capacities was at that time a peculiarly disreputable one. A "nurse" meant then a coarse old woman, always ignorant, usually dirty, often brutal, a Mrs. Gamp, in bunched-up sordid garments, tipping at the brandy-bottle or indulging in worse irregularities. The nurses in the hospitals were especially notorious for immoral conduct; sobriety almost unknown among them; and they could hardly be trusted to carry out the simplest medical duties. Certainly, things have changed since those days; and that they *have* changed is due, far more than to any other human being, to Miss Nightingale herself. It is not to be wondered at that her parents should have shuddered at the notion of their daughter devoting her life to such an occupation. "It was as if," she herself said afterwards, "I had wanted to be a kitchen-maid." Yet the want, absurd, impracticable as it was, not only remained fixed immovably in her heart, but grew in intensity day by day. Her wretchedness deepened into a morbid melancholy. Everything about her was vile, and she herself, it was clear, to have deserved such misery, was even viler than her surroundings. Yes, she had sinned—"standing before God's judgment seat." "No one," she declared, "has so grieved the Holy Spirit"; of that she was quite certain. It was in vain that she prayed to be delivered from vanity and hypocrisy, and she could not bear to smile or to be gay, "because she hated God to hear her laugh, as if she had not repented of her sin."

A weaker spirit would have been overwhelmed by the load of such distresses—would have yielded or snapped. But this extraordinary young woman held firm, and fought her way to victory. With an amazing persistency, during the eight years that followed her rebuff over Salisbury Hospital, she struggled and worked and planned. While superficially she was carrying on the life of a brilliant girl in high

society, while internally she was a prey to the tortures of regret and of remorse, she yet possessed the energy to collect the knowledge and to undergo the experience which alone could enable her to do what she had determined she would do in the end. In secret she devoured the reports of medical commissions, the pamphlets of sanitary authorities, the histories of hospitals and homes. She spent the intervals of the London season in ragged schools and workhouses. When she went abroad with her family, she used her spare time so well that there was hardly a great hospital in Europe with which she was not acquainted, hardly a great city whose slums she had not passed through. She managed to spend some days in a convent school in Rome, and some weeks as a "*Sœur de Charité*" in Paris. Then, while her mother and sister were taking the waters at Carlsbad, she succeeded in slipping off to a nursing institution at Kaiserswerth, where she remained for more than three months. This was the critical event of her life. The experience which she gained as a nurse at Kaiserswerth formed the foundation of all her future action and finally fixed her in her career.

But one other trial awaited her. The allurements of the world she had brushed aside with disdain and loathing; she had resisted the subtler temptation which, in her weariness, had sometimes come upon her, of devoting her baffled energies to art or literature; the last ordeal appeared in the shape of a desirable young man. Hitherto, her lovers had been nothing to her but an added burden and a mockery; but now—For a moment, she wavered. A new feeling swept over her—a feeling which she had never known before, which she was never to know again. The most powerful and the profoundest of all the instincts of humanity laid claim upon her. But it rose before her, that instinct, arrayed—how could it be otherwise?—in the inevitable habiliments of a Victorian marriage; and she had the strength to stamp it underfoot.

I have an intellectual nature which requires satisfaction [she noted], and that would find it in him. I have a passional nature which requires satisfaction, and that would find it in him. I have a moral, an active nature which requires satisfaction, and that would not find it in his life. Sometimes I think that I will satisfy my passional nature at all events. . . .

But no, she knew in her heart that it could not be. "To be nailed to a continuation and exaggeration of my present life . . . to put it out of my power ever to be able to seize the chance of forming for myself a true and rich life"—that would be a suicide. She made her choice, and refused what was at least a certain happiness for a visionary good

which might never come to her at all. And so she returned to her old life of waiting and bitterness.

The thoughts and feelings that I have now [she wrote] I can remember since I was six years old. A profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my faculties, I have always felt essential to me, I have always longed for. The first thought I can remember, and the last, was nursing work; and in the absence of this, education work, but more the education of the bad than of the young. . . . Everything has been tried, foreign travel, kind friends, everything. My God! What is to become of me?

A desirable young man? Dust and ashes! What was there desirable in such a thing as that? "In my thirty-first year," she noted in her diary, "I see nothing desirable but death."

Three more years passed, and then at last the pressure of time told; her family seemed to realise that she was old enough and strong enough to have her way; and she became the superintendent of a charitable nursing home in Harley Street. She had gained her independence, though it was in a meagre sphere enough; and her mother was still not quite resigned: surely Florence might at least spend the summer in the country. At times, indeed, among her intimates, Mrs. Nightingale almost wept. "We are ducks," she said with tears in her eyes, "who have hatched a wild swan." But the poor lady was wrong; it was not a swan that they had hatched; it was an eagle.

## II

Miss Nightingale had been a year in her nursing-home in Harley Street, when Fate knocked at the door. The Crimean War broke out; the battle of the Alma was fought; and the terrible condition of our military hospitals at Scutari began to be known in England. It sometimes happens that the plans of Providence are a little difficult to follow, but on this occasion all was plain; there was a perfect co-ordination of events. For years Miss Nightingale had been getting ready; at last she was prepared—experienced, free, mature, yet still young—she was thirty-four—desirous to serve, accustomed to command: at that precise moment the desperate need of a great nation came, and she was there to satisfy it. If the war had fallen a few years earlier, she would have lacked the knowledge, perhaps even the power, for such a work; a few years later and she would, no doubt, have been fixed in the routine of some absorbing task, and moreover, she would have been growing old. Nor was it only the coincidence of Time that was remarkable. It so fell out that Sidney Herbert was

at the War Office and in the Cabinet; and Sidney Herbert was an intimate friend of Miss Nightingale's, convinced, from personal experience in charitable work, of her supreme capacity. After such premises, it seems hardly more than a matter of course that her letter, in which she offered her services for the East, and Sidney Herbert's letter, in which he asked for them, should actually have crossed in the post. Thus it all happened, without a hitch. The appointment was made, and even Mrs. Nightingale, overawed by the magnitude of the venture, could only approve. A pair of faithful friends offered themselves as personal attendants; thirty-eight nurses were collected; and within a week of the crossing of the letters Miss Nightingale, amid a great burst of popular enthusiasm, left for Constantinople.

Among the numerous letters which she received on her departure was one from Dr. Manning, who at that time was working in comparative obscurity as a Catholic priest in Bayswater. "God will keep you," he wrote, "and my prayer for you will be that your one object of Worship, Pattern of Imitation, and source of consolation and strength may be the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord."

To what extent Dr. Manning's prayer was answered must remain a matter of doubt; but this much is certain, that, if ever a prayer was needed, it was needed then for Florence Nightingale. For dark as had been the picture of the state of affairs at Scutari, revealed to the English public in the despatches of the *Times* correspondent and in a multitude of private letters, yet the reality turned out to be darker still. What had occurred was, in brief, the complete break-down of our medical arrangements at the seat of war. The origins of this awful failure were complex and manifold; they stretched back through long years of peace and carelessness in England; they could be traced through endless ramifications of administrative incapacity—from the inherent faults of confused systems to the petty bunglings of minor officials, from the inevitable ignorance of Cabinet Ministers to the fatal exactitudes of narrow routine. In the inquiries which followed it was clearly shown that the evil was in reality that worst of all evils—one which has been caused by nothing in particular and for which no one in particular is to blame. The whole organisation of the war machine was incompetent and out of date. The old Duke had sat for a generation at the Horse Guards repressing innovations with an iron hand. There was an extraordinary overlapping of authorities, an almost incredible shifting of responsibilities to and fro. As for such a notion as the creation and the maintenance of a really adequate medical service for the army—in that atmosphere of aged chaos, how could it have entered anybody's head? Before the war, the easy-going officials at

Westminster were naturally persuaded that all was well—or at least as well as could be expected; when someone, for instance, actually had the temerity to suggest the formation of a corps of army nurses, he was at once laughed out of court. When the war had begun, the gallant British officers in control of affairs had other things to think about than the petty details of medical organisation. Who had bothered with such trifles in the Peninsula? And surely, on that occasion, we had done pretty well. Thus the most obvious precautions were neglected, the most necessary preparations put off from day to day. The principal medical officer of the army, Dr. Hall, was summoned from India at a moment's notice, and was unable to visit England before taking up his duties at the front. And it was not until after the battle of the Alma, when we had been at war for many months, that we acquired hospital accommodation at Scutari for more than a thousand men. Errors, follies, and vices on the part of individuals there doubtless were; but, in the general reckoning, they were of small account—insignificant symptoms of the deep disease of the body politic—the enormous calamity of administrative collapse.

Miss Nightingale arrived at Scutari—a suburb of Constantinople, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus—on November 4th, 1854; it was ten days after the battle of Balaclava, and the day before the battle of Inkerman. The organisation of the hospitals, which had already given way under the stress of the battle of the Alma, was now to be subjected to the further pressure which these two desperate and bloody engagements implied. Great detachments of wounded were already beginning to pour in. The men, after receiving such summary treatment as could be given them at the smaller hospitals in the Crimea itself, were forthwith shipped in batches of two hundred across the Black Sea to Scutari. This voyage was in normal times one of four days and a half; but the times were no longer normal, and now the transit often lasted for a fortnight or three weeks. It received, not without reason, the name of “the middle passage.” Between, and sometimes on the decks, the wounded, the sick, and the dying were crowded—men who had just undergone the amputation of limbs, men in the clutches of fever or of frostbite, men in the last stages of dysentery and cholera—without beds, sometimes without blankets, often hardly clothed. The one or two surgeons on board did what they could; but medical stores were lacking, and the only form of nursing available was that provided by a handful of invalid soldiers, who were usually themselves prostrate by the end of the voyage. There was no other food beside the ordinary salt rations of ship diet; and even the water was sometimes so stored that it was out of reach of the weak. For many months, the average



of deaths during these voyages was seventy-four in the thousand; the corpses were shot out into the waters; and who shall say that they were the most unfortunate? At Scutari, the landing-stage, constructed with all the perverseness of Oriental ingenuity, could only be approached with great difficulty, and, in rough weather, not at all. When it was reached, what remained of the men in the ships had first to be disembarked, and then conveyed up a steep slope of a quarter of a mile to the nearest of the hospitals. The most serious cases might be put upon stretchers—for there were far too few for all; the rest were carried or dragged up the hill by such convalescent soldiers as could be got together, who were not too obviously infirm for the work. At last the journey was accomplished; slowly, one by one, living or dying, the wounded were carried up into the hospital. And in the hospital what did they find?

*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate*: the delusive doors bore no such inscription; and yet behind them Hell yawned. Want, neglect, confusion, misery—in every shape and in every degree of intensity—filled the endless corridors and the vast apartments of the gigantic barrack-house, which, without forethought or preparation, had been hurriedly set aside as the chief shelter for the victims of the war. The very building itself was radically defective. Huge sewers underlay it, and cess-pools loaded with filth wafted their poison into the upper rooms. The floors were in so rotten a condition that many of them could not be scrubbed; the walls were thick with dirt; incredible multitudes of vermin swarmed everywhere. And, enormous as the building was, it was yet too small. It contained four miles of beds, crushed together so close that there was but just room to pass between them. Under such conditions, the most elaborate system of ventilation might well have been at fault; but here there was no ventilation. The stench was indescribable. "I have been well acquainted," said Miss Nightingale, "with the dwellings of the worst parts of most of the great cities in Europe, but have never been in any atmosphere which I could compare with that of the Barrack Hospital at night." The structural defects were equalled by the deficiencies in the commonest objects of hospital use. There were not enough bedsteads; the sheets were of canvas, and so coarse that the wounded men recoiled from them, begging to be left in their blankets; there was no bedroom furniture of any kind, and empty beer-bottles were used for candlesticks. There were no basins, no towels, no soap, no brooms, no mops, no trays, no plates; there were neither slippers nor scissors, neither shoebrushes nor blacking; there were no knives or forks or spoons. The supply of fuel was constantly deficient. The cooking arrangements were preposterously inade-

quate, and the laundry was a farce. As for purely medical materials, the tale was no better. Stretchers, splints, bandages—all were lacking; and so were the most ordinary drugs.

To replace such wants, to struggle against such difficulties, there was a handful of men overburdened by the strain of ceaseless work, bound down by the traditions of official routine, and enfeebled either by old age or inexperience or sheer incompetence. They had proved utterly unequal to their task. The principal doctor was lost in the imbecilities of a senile optimism. The wretched official whose business it was to provide for the wants of the hospital was tied fast hand and foot by red tape. A few of the younger doctors struggled valiantly, but what could they do? Unprepared, disorganised, with such help only as they could find among the miserable band of convalescent soldiers drafted off to tend their sick comrades, they were faced with disease, mutilation, and death in all their most appalling forms, crowded multitudinously about them in an ever increasing mass. They were like men in a shipwreck, fighting, not for safety, but for the next moment's bare existence—to gain, by yet another frenzied effort, some brief respite from the waters of destruction.

In these surroundings, those who had been long inured to scenes of human suffering—surgeons with a world-wide knowledge of agonies, soldiers familiar with fields of carnage, missionaries with remembrances of famine and of plague—yet found a depth of horror which they had never known before. There were moments, there were places, in the Barrack Hospital at Scutari, where the strongest hand was struck with trembling, and the boldest eye would turn away its gaze.

Miss Nightingale came, and she, at any rate, in that Inferno, did not abandon hope. For one thing, she brought material succour. Before she left London she had consulted Dr. Andrew Smith, the head of the Army Medical Board, as to whether it would be useful to take out stores of any kind to Scutari; and Dr. Andrew Smith had told her that "nothing was needed." Even Sidney Herbert had given her similar assurances; possibly, owing to an oversight, there might have been some delay in the delivery of the medical stores, which, he said, had been sent out from England "in profusion," but "four days would have remedied this." She preferred to trust her own instincts, and at Marseilles purchased a large quantity of miscellaneous provisions, which were of the utmost use at Scutari. She came, too, amply provided with money—in all, during her stay in the East, about £7,000 reached her from private sources; and, in addition, she was able to avail herself of another valuable means of help. At the same time as herself, Mr. Macdonald, of the *Times*, had arrived at Scutari, charged with the duty of adminis-

tering the large sums of money collected through the agency of that newspaper in aid of the sick and wounded; and Mr. Macdonald had the sense to see that the best use he could make of the *Times* Fund was to put it at the disposal of Miss Nightingale.

I cannot conceive [wrote an eye-witness], as I now calmly look back on the first three weeks after the arrival of the wounded from Inkerman, how it could have been possible to have avoided a state of things too disastrous to contemplate, had not Miss Nightingale been there, with the means placed at her disposal by Mr. Macdonald.

But the official view was different. What! Was the public service to admit, by accepting outside charity, that it was unable to discharge its own duties without the assistance of private and irregular benevolence? Never! And accordingly when Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our Ambassador at Constantinople, was asked by Mr. Macdonald to indicate how the *Times* Fund could best be employed, he answered that there was indeed one object to which it might very well be devoted—the building of an English Protestant Church at Pera.

Mr. Macdonald did not waste further time with Lord Stratford, and immediately joined forces with Miss Nightingale. But, with such a frame of mind in the highest quarters, it is easy to imagine the kind of disgust and alarm with which the sudden intrusion of a band of amateurs and females must have filled the minds of the ordinary officer and the ordinary military surgeon. They could not understand it; what had women to do with war? Honest Colonels relieved their spleen by the cracking of heavy jokes about "the Bird"; while poor Dr. Hall, a rough terrier of a man, who had worried his way to the top of his profession, was struck speechless with astonishment, and at last observed that Miss Nightingale's appointment was extremely droll.

Her position was, indeed, an official one, but it was hardly the easier for that. In the hospitals it was her duty to provide the services of herself and her nurses when they were asked for by the doctors, and not until then. At first some of the surgeons would have nothing to say to her, and, though she was welcomed by others, the majority were hostile and suspicious. But gradually she gained ground. Her good will could not be denied, and her capacity could not be disregarded. With consummate tact, with all the gentleness of supreme strength, she managed at last to impose her personality upon the susceptible, overwrought, discouraged, and helpless group of men in authority who surrounded her. She stood firm; she was a rock in the angry ocean; with her alone was safety, comfort, life. And so it was that hope dawned at Scutari. The reign of chaos and old night began to dwindle; order

came upon the scene, and common sense, and forethought, and decision, radiating out from the little room off the great gallery in the Barrack Hospital where day and night the Lady Superintendent was at her task. Progress might be slow, but it was sure. The first sign of a great change came with the appearance of some of those necessary objects with which the hospitals had been unprovided for months. The sick men began to enjoy the use of towels and soap, knives and forks, combs and tooth-brushes. Dr. Hall might snort when he heard of it, asking, with a growl, what a soldier wanted with a tooth-brush; but the good work went on. Eventually the whole business of purveying to the hospitals was, in effect, carried out by Miss Nightingale. She alone, it seemed, whatever the contingency, knew where to lay her hands on what was wanted; she alone could dispense her stores with readiness; above all she alone possessed the art of circumventing the pernicious influences of official etiquette. This was her greatest enemy, and sometimes even she was baffled by it. On one occasion 27,000 shirts sent out at her instance by the Home Government, arrived, were landed, and were only waiting to be unpacked. But the official "Purveyor" intervened; "he could not unpack them," he said, "without a board." Miss Nightingale pleaded in vain; the sick and wounded lay half-naked shivering for want of clothing; and three weeks elapsed before the Board released the shirts. A little later, however, on a similar occasion, Miss Nightingale felt that she could assert her own authority. She ordered a Government consignment to be forcibly opened, while the miserable "Purveyor" stood by, wringing his hands in departmental agony.

Vast quantities of valuable stores sent from England lay, she found, engulfed in the bottomless abyss of the Turkish Customs House. Other ship-loads, buried beneath munitions of war destined for Balaclava, passed Scutari without a sign, and thus hospital materials were sometimes carried to and fro three times over the Black Sea, before they reached their destination. The whole system was clearly at fault, and Miss Nightingale suggested to the home authorities that a Government Store House should be instituted at Scutari for the reception and distribution of the consignments. Six months after her arrival this was done.

In the meantime she had reorganised the kitchens and the laundries in the hospitals. The ill-cooked hunks of meat, vilely served at irregular intervals, which had hitherto been the only diet for the sick men were replaced by punctual meals, well-prepared and appetising, while strengthening extra foods—soups and wines, and jellies ("preposterous luxuries," snarled Dr. Hall)—were distributed to those who needed

them. One thing, however, she could not effect. The separation of the bones from the meat was no part of official cookery: the rule was that the food must be divided into equal portions, and if some of the portions were all bone—well, every man must take his chance. The rule, perhaps, was not a very good one; but there it was. "It would require a new Regulation of the Service," she was told, "to bone the meat." As for the washing arrangements, they were revolutionised. Up to the time of Miss Nightingale's arrival the number of shirts which the authorities had succeeded in washing was seven. The hospital bedding, she found, was "washed" in cold water. She took a Turkish house, had boilers installed, and employed soldiers' wives to do the laundry work. The expenses were defrayed from her own funds and that of the *Times*; and henceforward the sick and wounded had the comfort of clean linen.

Then she turned her attention to their clothing. Owing to military exigencies the greater number of the men had abandoned their kit; their knapsacks were lost for ever; they possessed nothing but what was on their persons, and that was usually only fit for speedy destruction. The "Purveyor," of course, pointed out that, according to the regulations, all soldiers should bring with them into hospital an adequate supply of clothing, and he declared that it was no business of his to make good their deficiencies. Apparently, it was the business of Miss Nightingale. She procured socks, boots, and shirts in enormous quantities; she had trousers made; she rigged up dressing-gowns. "The fact is," she told Sidney Herbert, "I am now clothing the British Army."

All at once, word came from the Crimea that a great new contingent of sick and wounded might shortly be expected. Where were they to go? Every available inch in the wards was occupied; the affair was serious and pressing, and the authorities stood aghast. There were some dilapidated rooms in the Barrack Hospital, unfit for human habitation, but Miss Nightingale believed that if measures were promptly taken they might be made capable of accommodating several hundred beds. One of the doctors agreed with her; the rest of the officials were irresolute: it would be a very expensive job, they said; it would involve building; and who could take the responsibility? The proper course was that a representation should be made to the Director-General of the Army Medical Department in London; then the Director-General would apply to the Horse Guards, the Horse Guards would move the Ordnance, the Ordnance would lay the matter before the Treasury, and, if the Treasury gave its consent, the work might be correctly carried through, several months after the necessity for it

had disappeared. Miss Nightingale, however, had made up her mind, and she persuaded Lord Stratford—or thought she had persuaded him—to give his sanction to the required expenditure. A hundred and twenty-five workmen were immediately engaged, and the work was begun. The workmen struck; whereupon Lord Stratford washed his hands of the whole business. Miss Nightingale engaged two hundred other workmen on her own authority, and paid the bill out of her own resources. The wards were ready by the required date; five hundred sick men were received in them; and all the utensils, including knives, forks, spoons, cans and towels, were supplied by Miss Nightingale.

This remarkable woman was in truth performing the function of an administrative chief. How had this come about? Was she not in reality merely a nurse? Was it not her duty simply to tend to the sick? And indeed, was it not as a ministering angel, a gentle “lady with a lamp” that she actually impressed the minds of her contemporaries? No doubt that was so; and yet it is no less certain that, as she herself said, the specific business of nursing was “the least important of the functions into which she had been forced.” It was clear that in the state of disorganisation into which the hospitals at Scutari had fallen the most pressing, the really vital, need was for something more than nursing; it was for the necessary elements of civilised life—the commonest material objects, the most ordinary cleanliness, the rudimentary habits of order and authority. “Oh, dear Miss Nightingale,” said one of her party as they were approaching Constantinople, “when we land, let there be no delays, let us get straight to nursing the poor fellows!” “The strongest will be wanted at the wash-tub,” was Miss Nightingale’s answer. And it was upon the wash-tub, and all that the wash-tub stood for, that she expended her greatest energies. Yet to say that is perhaps to say too much. For to those who watched her at work among the sick, moving day and night from bed to bed, with that unflinching courage, with that indefatigable vigilance, it seemed as if the concentrated force of an undivided and unparalleled devotion could hardly suffice for that portion of her task alone. Wherever, in those vast wards, suffering was at its worst and the need for help was greatest, there, as if by magic, was Miss Nightingale. Her superhuman equanimity would, at the moment of some ghastly operation, nerve the victim to endure and almost to hope. Her sympathy would assuage the pangs of dying and bring back to those still living something of the forgotten charm of life. Over and over again her untiring efforts rescued those whom the surgeons had abandoned as beyond the possibility of cure. Her mere presence brought with it a strange influence.

A passionate idolatry spread among the men: they kissed her shadow as it passed. They did more. "Before she came," said a soldier, "there was cussin' and swearin', but after that it was as 'oly as a church." The most cherished privilege of the fighting man was abandoned for the sake of Miss Nightingale. In those "lowest sinks of human misery," as she herself put it, she never heard the use of one expression "which could distress a gentlewoman."

She was heroic; and these were the humble tributes paid by those of grosser mould to that high quality. Certainly, she was heroic. Yet her heroism was not of that simple sort so dear to the readers of novels and the compilers of hagiologies—the romantic sentimental heroism with which mankind loves to invest its chosen darlings: it was made of sterner stuff. To the wounded soldier on his couch of agony she might well appear in the guise of a gracious angel of mercy; but the military surgeons, and the orderlies, and her own nurses, and the "Purveyor," and Dr. Hall, and even Lord Stratford himself could tell a different story. It was not by gentle sweetness and womanly self-abnegation that she had brought order out of chaos in the Scutari Hospitals, that, from her own resources, she had clothed the British Army, that she had spread her dominion over the serried and reluctant powers of the official world; it was by strict method, by stern discipline, by rigid attention to detail, by ceaseless labour, by the fixed determination of an indomitable will. Beneath her cool and calm demeanour lurked fierce and passionate fires. As she passed through the wards in her plain dress, so quiet, so unassuming, she struck the casual observer simply as the pattern of a perfect lady; but the keener eye perceived something more than that—the serenity of high deliberation in the scope of the capacious brow, the sign of power in the dominating curve of the thin nose, and the traces of a harsh and dangerous temper—something peevish, something mocking, and yet something precise—in the small and delicate mouth. There was humour in the face; but the curious watcher might wonder whether it was humour of a very pleasant kind; might ask himself, even as he heard the laughter and marked the jokes with which she cheered the spirits of her patients, what sort of sardonic merriment this same lady might not give vent to, in the privacy of her chamber. As for her voice, it was true of it, even more than of her countenance, that it "had that in it one must fain call master." Those clear tones were in no need of emphasis: "I never heard her raise her voice," said one of her companions. Only, when she had spoken, it seemed as if nothing could follow but obedience. Once, when she had given some direction, a doctor ventured to remark that the thing could not be done. "But it must be done," said Miss

Nightingale. A chance bystander, who heard the words, never forgot through all his life the irresistible authority of them. And they were spoken quietly—very quietly indeed.

Late at night, when the long miles of beds lay wrapped in darkness, Miss Nightingale would sit at work in her little room, over her correspondence. It was one of the most formidable of all her duties. There were hundreds of letters to be written to the friends and relations of soldiers; there was the enormous mass of official documents to be dealt with; there were her own private letters to be answered; and, most important of all, there was the composition of her long and confidential reports to Sidney Herbert. These were by no means official communications. Her soul, pent up all day in the restraint and reserve of a vast responsibility, now at last poured itself out in these letters with all its natural vehemence, like a swollen torrent through an open sluice. Here, at least, she did not mince matters. Here she painted in her darkest colours the hideous scenes which surrounded her; here she tore away remorselessly the last veils still shrouding the abominable truth. Then she would fill the pages with recommendations and suggestions, with criticisms of the minutest details of organisation, with elaborate calculations of contingencies, with exhaustive analyses and statistical statements piled up in breathless eagerness one on the top of the other. And then her pen, in the virulence of its volubility, would rush on to the discussion of individuals, to the denunciation of an incompetent surgeon or the ridicule of a self-sufficient nurse. Her sarcasm searched the ranks of the officials with the deadly and unsparring precision of a machine-gun. Her nicknames were terrible. She respected no one: Lord Stratford, Lord Raglan, Lady Stratford, Dr. Andrew Smith, Dr. Hall, the Commissary-General, the Purveyor—she fulminated against them all. The intolerable futility of mankind obsessed her like a nightmare, and she gnashed her teeth against it. "I do well to be angry," was the burden of her cry. How many just men were there at Scutari? How many who cared at all for the sick, or had done anything for their relief? Were there ten? Were there five? Was there even one? She could not be sure.

At one time, during several weeks, her vituperations descended upon the head of Sidney Herbert himself. He had misinterpreted her wishes, he had traversed her positive instructions, and it was not until he had admitted his error and apologised in abject terms that he was allowed again into favour. While this misunderstanding was at its height an aristocratic young gentleman arrived at Scutari with a recommendation from the Minister. He had come out from England filled with a romantic desire to render homage to the angelic heroine of his dreams.



He had, he said, cast aside his life of ease and luxury; he would devote his days and nights to the service of that gentle lady; he would perform the most menial offices, he would "fag" for her, he would be her footman—and feel requited by a single smile. A single smile, indeed, he had, but it was of an unexpected kind. Miss Nightingale at first refused to see him, and then, when she consented, believing that he was an emissary sent by Sidney Herbert to put her in the wrong over their dispute, she took notes of her conversation with him, and insisted on his signing them at the end of it. The young gentleman returned to England by the next ship.

This quarrel with Sidney Herbert was, however, an exceptional incident. Alike by him, and by Lord Panmure, his successor at the War Office, she was firmly supported; and the fact that during the whole of her stay at Scutari she had the Home Government at her back, was her trump card in her dealings with the hospital authorities. Nor was it only the Government that was behind her: public opinion in England early recognised the high importance of her mission, and its enthusiastic appreciation of her work soon reached an extraordinary height. The Queen herself was deeply moved. She made repeated inquiries as to the welfare of Miss Nightingale; she asked to see her accounts of the wounded, and made her the intermediary between the throne and the troops.

Let Mrs. Herbert know [she wrote to the War Minister] that I wish Miss Nightingale and the ladies would tell these poor noble, wounded, and sick men that *no one* takes a warmer interest or feels *more* for their sufferings or admires their courage and heroism *more* than their Queen. Day and night she thinks of her beloved troops. So does the Prince. Beg Mrs. Herbert to communicate these my words to those ladies, as I know that *our* sympathy is much valued by these noble fellows.

The letter was read aloud in the wards by the Chaplain. "It is a very feeling letter," said the men.

And so the months passed, and that fell winter which had begun with Inkerman and had dragged itself out through the long agony of the investment of Sebastopol, at last was over. In May, 1855, after six months of labour, Miss Nightingale could look with something like satisfaction at the condition of the Scutari hospitals. Had they done nothing more than survive the terrible strain which had been put upon them, it would have been a matter for congratulation; but they had done much more than that; they had marvellously improved. The confusion and the pressure in the wards had come to an end; order reigned in them, and cleanliness; the supplies were bountiful

and prompt; important sanitary works had been carried out. One simple comparison of figures was enough to reveal the extraordinary change: the rate of mortality among the cases treated had fallen from 42 per cent to 22 per thousand. But still the indefatigable lady was not satisfied. The main problem had been solved—the physical needs of the men had been provided for; their mental and spiritual needs remained. She set up and furnished reading-rooms and recreation-rooms. She started classes and lectures. Officers were amazed to see her treating their men as if they were human beings, and assured her that she would only end by “spoiling the brutes.” But that was not Miss Nightingale’s opinion, and she was justified. The private soldier began to drink less, and even—though that seemed impossible—to save his pay. Miss Nightingale became a banker for the army, receiving and sending home large sums of money every month. At last, reluctantly, the Government followed suit, and established machinery of its own for the remission of money. Lord Panmure, however, remained sceptical; “it will do no good,” he pronounced; “the British soldier is not a remitting animal.” But, in fact, during the next six months, £71,000 was sent home.

Amid all these activities, Miss Nightingale took up the further task of inspecting the hospitals in the Crimea itself. The labour was extreme, and the conditions of life were almost intolerable. She spent whole days in the saddle, or was driven over those bleak and rocky heights in a baggage cart. Sometimes she stood for hours in the heavily falling snow, and would only reach her hut at dead of night after walking for miles through perilous ravines. Her powers of resistance seemed incredible, but at last they were exhausted. She was attacked by fever, and for a moment came very near to death. Yet she worked on; if she could not move, she could at least write; and write she did until her mind had left her; and after it had left her, in what seemed the delirious trance of death itself, she still wrote. When, after many weeks, she was strong enough to travel, she was to return to England, but she utterly refused. She would not go back, she said, before the last of the soldiers had left Scutari.

This happy moment had almost arrived, when suddenly the smouldering hostilities of the medical authorities burst out into a flame. Dr. Hall’s labours had been rewarded by a K.C.B.—letters which, as Miss Nightingale told Sidney Herbert, she could only suppose to mean “Knight of the Crimean Burial-grounds”—and the honour had turned his head. He was Sir John, and he would be thwarted no longer. Disputes had lately arisen between Miss Nightingale and some of the nurses in the Crimean hospitals. The situation had been embittered by

rumours of religious dissensions, for, while the Crimean nurses were Roman Catholics, many of those at Scutari were suspected of a regrettable propensity towards the tenets of Dr. Pusey. Miss Nightingale was by no means disturbed by these sectarian differences, but any suggestion that her supreme authority over all the nurses with the Army was in doubt was enough to rouse her to fury; and it appeared that Mrs. Bridgeman, the Reverend Mother in the Crimeas, had ventured to call that authority in question. Sir John Hall thought that his opportunity had come, and strongly supported Mrs. Bridgeman—or, as Miss Nightingale preferred to call her, the “Reverend Brickbat.” There was a violent struggle; Miss Nightingale’s rage was terrible. Dr. Hall, she declared, was doing his best to “root her out of the Crimea.” She would bear it no longer; the War Office was playing her false; there was only one thing to be done—Sidney Herbert must move for the production of papers in the House of Commons, so that the public might be able to judge between her and her enemies. Sidney Herbert with great difficulty calmed her down. Orders were immediately dispatched putting her supremacy beyond doubt, and the Reverend Brickbat withdrew from the scene. Sir John, however, was more tenacious. A few weeks later, Miss Nightingale and her nurses visited the Crimea for the last time, and the brilliant idea occurred to him that he could crush her by a very simple expedient—he would starve her into submission; and he actually ordered that no rations of any kind should be supplied to her. He had already tried this plan with great effect upon an unfortunate medical man whose presence in the Crimea he had considered an intrusion; but he was now to learn that such tricks were thrown away upon Miss Nightingale. With extraordinary foresight, she had brought with her a great supply of food; she succeeded in obtaining more at her own expense and by her own exertions; and thus for ten days, in that inhospitable country, she was able to feed herself and twenty-four nurses. Eventually the military authorities intervened in her favour, and Sir John had to confess that he was beaten.

It was not until July, 1856—four months after the Declaration of Peace—that Miss Nightingale left Scutari for England. Her reputation was now enormous, and the enthusiasm of the public was unbounded. The Royal approbation was expressed by the gift of a brooch, accompanied by a private letter.

You are, I know, well aware [wrote Her Majesty] of the high sense I entertain of the Christian devotion which you have displayed during this great and bloody war, and I need hardly repeat to you how warm my

admiration is for your services, which are fully equal to those of my dear and brave soldiers, whose sufferings you have had the *privilege* of alleviating in so merciful a manner. I am, however, anxious of marking my feelings in a manner which I trust will be agreeable to you, and therefore send you with this letter a brooch, the form and emblems of which commemorate your great and blessed work, and which I hope you will wear as a mark of the high approbation of your Sovereign!

"It will be a very great satisfaction to me," Her Majesty added, "to make the acquaintance of one who has set so bright an example to our sex."

The brooch, which was designed by the Prince Consort, bore a St. George's cross in red enamel, and the Royal cypher surmounted by diamonds. The whole was encircled by the inscription, "Blessed are the Merciful."

### III

The name of Florence Nightingale lives in the memory of the world by virtue of the lurid and heroic adventure of the Crimea. Had she died—as she nearly did—upon her return to England, her reputation would hardly have been different; her legend would have come down to us almost as we know it today—that gentle vision of female virtue which first took shape before the adoring eyes of the sick soldiers at Scutari. Yet, as a matter of fact, she lived for more than half a century after the Crimean War; and during the greater part of that long period all the energy and all the devotion of her extraordinary nature were working at their highest pitch. What she accomplished in those years of unknown labour could, indeed, hardly have been more glorious than her Crimean triumphs; but it was certainly more important. The true history was far stranger even than the myth. In Miss Nightingale's own eyes the adventure of the Crimea was a mere incident—scarcely more than a useful stepping-stone in her career. It was the fulcrum with which she hoped to move the world; but it was only the fulcrum. For more than a generation she was to sit in secret, working her lever: and her real life began at the very moment when, in the popular imagination, it had ended.

She arrived in England in a shattered state of health. The hardships and the ceaseless effort of the last two years had undermined her nervous system; her heart was pronounced to be affected; she suffered constantly from fainting-fits and terrible attacks of utter physical prostration. The doctors declared that one thing alone would save her—a complete and prolonged rest. But that was also the one thing with which she would have nothing to do. She had never been in the habit

of resting; why should she begin now? Now, when her opportunity had come at last; now, when the iron was hot, and it was time to strike? No; she had work to do; and, come what might, she would do it. The doctors protested in vain; in vain her family lamented and entreated, in vain her friends pointed out to her the madness of such a course. Madness? Mad—possessed—perhaps she was. A demoniac frenzy had seized upon her. As she lay upon her sofa, gasping, she devoured blue-books, dictated letters, and, in the intervals of her palpitations, cracked her febrile jokes. For months at a stretch she never left her bed. For years she was in daily expectation of Death. But she would not rest. At this rate, the doctors assured her, even if she did not die, she would become an invalid for life. She could not help that; there was the work to be done; and, as for the rest, very likely she might rest . . . when she had done it.

Wherever she went in London or in the country, in the hills of Derbyshire, or among the rhododendrons at Embley, she was haunted by a ghost. It was the spectre of Scutari—the hideous vision of the organisation of a military hospital. She would lay that phantom, or she would perish. The whole system of the Army Medical Department, the education of the Medical Officer, the regulations of hospital procedure . . . *rest?* How could she rest while these things were as they were, while, if the like necessity were to rise again, the like results would follow? And, even in peace and at home, what was the sanitary condition of the Army? The mortality in the barracks was, she found, nearly double the mortality in civil life. "You might as well take 1,100 men every year out upon Salisbury Plain and shoot them," she said. After inspecting the hospitals at Chatham, she smiled grimly. "Yes, this is one more symptom of the system which, in the Crimea, put to death 16,000 men." Scutari had given her knowledge; and it had given her power too: her enormous reputation was at her back—an incalculable force. Other work, other duties, might lie before her; but the most urgent, the most obvious of all was to look to the health of the Army.

One of her very first steps was to take advantage of the invitation which Queen Victoria had sent her to the Crimea, together with the commemorative brooch. Within a few weeks of her return, she visited Balmoral, and had several interviews both with the Queen and the Prince Consort. "She put before us," wrote the Prince in his diary, "all the defects of our present military hospital system and the reforms that are needed." She related the whole story of her experiences in the East; and, in addition, she managed to have some long and confidential talks with His Royal Highness on metaphysics and religion. The impression which she created was excellent. "*Sie gefällt uns sehr,*" noted the Prince,

*"ist sehr bescheiden."* Her Majesty's comment was different—"Such a head! I wish we had her at the War Office."

But Miss Nightingale was not at the War Office, and for a very simple reason: she was a woman. Lord Panmure, however, *was* (though indeed the reason for that was not quite so simple); and it was upon Lord Panmure that the issue of Miss Nightingale's efforts for reform must primarily depend. That burly Scottish nobleman had not, in spite of his most earnest endeavours, had a very easy time of it as Secretary of State for War. He had come into office in the middle of the Sebastopol campaign, and had felt himself very well fitted for the position, since he had acquired in former days an inside knowledge of the Army—as a Captain of Hussars. It was this inside knowledge which had enabled him to inform Miss Nightingale with such authority that "the British soldier is not a remitting animal." And perhaps it was this same consciousness of a command of his subject which had impelled him to write a dispatch to Lord Raglan, blandly informing the Commander-in-Chief in the Field just how he was neglecting his duties, and pointing out to him that if he would only try he really might do a little better next time. Lord Raglan's reply, calculated as it was to make its recipient sink into the earth, did not quite have that effect upon Lord Panmure, who, whatever might have been his faults, had never been accused of being supersensitive. However, he allowed the matter to drop; and a little later Lord Raglan died—worn out, some people said, by work and anxiety. He was succeeded by an excellent red-nosed old gentleman, General Simpson, whom nobody has ever heard of, and who took Sebastopol. But Lord Panmure's relations with him were hardly more satisfactory than his relations with Lord Raglan; for, while Lord Raglan had been too independent, poor General Simpson erred in the opposite direction, perpetually asked advice, suffered from lumbago, doubted, his nose growing daily redder and redder, whether he was fit for his post, and, by alternate mails, sent in and withdrew his resignation. Then, too, both the General and the Minister suffered acutely from that distressingly useful new invention, the electric telegraph. On one occasion General Simpson felt obliged actually to expostulate.

I think, my Lord [he wrote], that some telegraphic messages reach us that cannot be sent under due authority, and are perhaps unknown to you, although under the protection of your Lordship's name. For instance, I was called up last night, a dragoon having come express with a telegraphic message in these words, "Lord Panmure to General Simpson—Captain Jarvis has been bitten by a centipede. How is he now?"

General Simpson might have put up with this, though to be sure it did seem "rather too trifling an affair to call for a dragoon to ride a couple of miles in the dark that he may knock up the Commander of the Army out of the very small allowance of sleep permitted him"; but what was really more than he could bear was to find "upon sending in the morning another mounted dragoon to inquire after Captain Jarvis, four miles off, that he never has been bitten at all, but has had a boil, from which he is fast recovering." But Lord Panmure had troubles of his own. His favourite nephew, Captain Dowbiggin, was at the front, and to one of his telegrams to the Commander-in-Chief the Minister had taken occasion to append the following carefully qualified sentence—"I recommend Dowbiggin to your notice, should you have a vacancy, and if he is fit." Unfortunately, in those early days, it was left to the discretion of the telegraphist to compress the messages which passed through his hands; so that the result was that Lord Panmure's delicate appeal reached its destination in the laconic form of "Look after Dowb." The Headquarters Staff were at first extremely puzzled; they were at last extremely amused. The story spread; and "Look after Dowb" remained for many years the familiar formula for describing official hints in favour of deserving nephews.

And now that all this was over, now that Sebastopol had been, somehow or another, taken, now that peace was, somehow or another, made, now that the troubles of office might surely be expected to be at an end at last—here was Miss Nightingale breaking in upon the scene, with her talk about the state of the hospitals and the necessity for sanitary reform. It was most irksome; and Lord Panmure almost began to wish that he was engaged upon some more congenial occupation—discussing, perhaps, the constitution of the Free Church of Scotland—a question in which he was profoundly interested. But no; duty was paramount; and he set himself, with a sigh of resignation, to the task of doing as little of it as he possibly could.

"The Bison" his friends called him; and the name fitted both his physical demeanour and his habit of mind. That large low head seemed to have been created for butting rather than for anything else. There he stood, four-square and menacing, in the doorway of reform; and it remained to be seen whether the bulky mass, upon whose solid hide even the barbed arrows of Lord Raglan's scorn had made no mark, would prove amenable to the pressure of Miss Nightingale. Nor was he alone in the doorway. There loomed behind him the whole phalanx of professional conservatism, the stubborn supporters of the out-of-date, the worshippers and the victims of War Office routine. Among these it was only natural that Dr. Andrew Smith, the head of the Army

Medical Department, should have been pre-eminent—Dr. Andrew Smith, who had assured Miss Nightingale before she left England that “nothing was wanted at Scutari.” Such were her opponents; but she too was not without allies. She had gained the ear of Royalty—which was something; at any moment that she pleased she could gain the ear of the public—which was a great deal. She had a host of admirers and friends; and—to say nothing of her personal qualities—her knowledge, her tenacity, her tact—she possessed, too, one advantage which then, far more even than now, carried an immense weight—she belonged to the highest circle of society. She moved naturally among Peers and Cabinet Ministers—she was one of their own set; and in those days their set was a very narrow one. What kind of attention would such persons have paid to some middle-class woman with whom they were not acquainted, who possessed great experience of army nursing and had decided views upon hospital reform? They would have politely ignored her; but it was impossible to ignore Flo Nightingale. When she spoke, they were obliged to listen; and, when they had once begun to do that—what might not follow? She knew her power, and she used it. She supported her weightiest minutes with familiar witty little notes. The Bison began to look grave. It might be difficult—it might be damned difficult—to put down one’s head against the white hand of a lady.

Of Miss Nightingale’s friends, the most important was Sidney Herbert. He was a man upon whom the good fairies seemed to have showered, as he lay in his cradle, all their most enviable gifts. Well born, handsome, rich, the master of Wilton—one of those great country-houses, clothed with the glamour of a historic past, which are the peculiar glory of England—he possessed, besides all these advantages, so charming, so lively, so gentle a disposition that no one who had once come near him could ever be his enemy. He was, in fact, a man of whom it was difficult not to say that he was a perfect English gentleman. For his virtues were equal even to his good fortune. He was religious—deeply religious: “I am more and more convinced every day,” he wrote, when he had been for some years a Cabinet Minister, “that in politics, as in everything else, nothing can be right which is not in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel.” No one was more unselfish; he was charitable and benevolent to a remarkable degree; and he devoted the whole of his life with an unwavering conscientiousness to the public service. With such a character, with such opportunities, what high hopes must have danced before him, what radiant visions of accomplished duties, of ever-increasing usefulness, of beneficent power, of the consciousness of disinterested success! Some of those hopes and



visions were, indeed, realised; but, in the end, the career of Sidney Herbert seemed to show that, with all their generosity, there was some gift or other—what was it?—some essential gift—which the good fairies had withheld, and that even the qualities of a perfect English gentleman may be no safeguard against anguish, humiliation, and defeat.

That career would certainly have been very different if he had never known Miss Nightingale. The alliance between them, which had begun with her appointment to Scutari, which had grown closer and closer while the war lasted, developed, after her return, into one of the most extraordinary of friendships. It was the friendship of a man and a woman intimately bound together by their devotion to a public cause; mutual affection, of course, played a part in it, but it was an incidental part; the whole soul of the relationship was a community of work. Perhaps out of England such an intimacy could hardly have existed—an intimacy so utterly untinctured not only by passion itself but by the suspicion of it. For years Sidney Herbert saw Miss Nightingale almost daily, for long hours together, corresponding with her incessantly when they were apart; and the tongue of scandal was silent; and one of the most devoted of her admirers was his wife. But what made the connection still more remarkable was the way in which the parts that were played in it were divided between the two. The man who acts, decides, and achieves; the woman who encourages, applauds, and—from a distance—inspires:—the combination is common enough; but Miss Nightingale was neither an Aspasia nor an Egeria. In her case it is almost true to say that the rôles were reversed; the qualities of pliancy and sympathy fell to the man, those of command and initiative to the woman. There was one thing only which Miss Nightingale lacked in her equipment for public life; she had not—she never could have—the public power and authority which belong to the successful politician. That power and authority Sidney Herbert possessed; the fact was obvious, and the conclusion no less so: it was through the man that the woman must work her will. She took hold of him, taught him, shaped him, absorbed him, dominated him through and through. He did not resist—he did not wish to resist; his natural inclination lay along the same path as hers; only that terrific personality swept him forward at her own fierce pace and with her own relentless stride. Swept him—where to? Ah! Why had he ever known Miss Nightingale? If Lord Panmure was a bison, Sidney Herbert, no doubt, was a stag—a comely, gallant creature springing through the forest; but the forest is a dangerous place. One has the image of those wide eyes fascinated suddenly by something feline, something strong; there is a

pause; and then the tigress has her claws in the quivering haunches; and then ——!

Besides Sidney Herbert, she had other friends who, in a more restricted sphere, were hardly less essential to her. If, in her condition of bodily collapse, she were to accomplish what she was determined that she should accomplish, the attentions and the services of others would be absolutely indispensable. Helpers and servers she must have; and accordingly there was soon formed about her a little group of devoted disciples upon whose affections and energies she could implicitly rely. Devoted, indeed, these disciples were, in no ordinary sense of the term; for certainly she was no light task-mistress, and he who set out to be of use to Miss Nightingale was apt to find, before he had gone very far, that he was in truth being made use of in good earnest—to the very limit of his endurance and his capacity. Perhaps, even beyond those limits; why not? Was she asking of others more than she was giving herself? Let them look at her lying there pale and breathless on the couch; could it be said that she spared herself? Why, then, should she spare others? And it was not for her own sake that she made these claims. For her own sake, indeed! No! They all knew it! it was for the sake of the work. And so the little band, bound body and soul in that strange servitude, laboured on ungrudgingly. Among the most faithful was her “Aunt Mai,” her father’s sister, who from the earliest days had stood beside her, who had helped her to escape from the thralldom of family life, who had been with her at Scutari, and who now acted almost the part of a mother to her, watching over her with infinite care in all the movements and uncertainties which her state of health involved. Another constant attendant was her brother-in-law, Sir Harry Verney, whom she found particularly valuable in parliamentary affairs. Arthur Clough, the poet, also a connection by marriage, she used in other ways. Ever since he had lost his faith at the time of the Oxford Movement, Clough had passed his life in a condition of considerable uneasiness, which was increased rather than diminished by the practice of poetry. Unable to decide upon the purpose of an existence whose savour had fled together with his belief in the Resurrection, his spirits lowered still further by ill-health, and his income not all that it should be, he had determined to seek the solution of his difficulties in the United States of America. But, even there, the solution was not forthcoming; and when, a little later, he was offered a post in a government department at home, he accepted it, came to live in London, and immediately fell under the influence of Miss Nightingale. Though the purpose of existence might be still uncertain and its nature still unsavoury, here, at any rate, under the eye of this in-

spired woman, was something real, something earnest: his only doubt was—could he be of any use? Certainly he could. There were a great number of miscellaneous little jobs which there was nobody handy to do. For instance, when Miss Nightingale was travelling, there were the railway-tickets to be taken; and there were proof-sheets to be corrected; and then there were parcels to be done up in brown paper, and carried to the post. Certainly he could be useful. And so, upon such occupations as these, Arthur Clough was set to work. "This that I see, is not all," he comforted himself by reflecting, "and this that I do is but little; nevertheless it is good, though there is better than it."

As time went on, her "Cabinet," as she called it, grew larger. Officials with whom her work brought her into touch and who sympathised with her objects, were pressed into her service; and old friends of the Crimean days gathered round her when they returned to England. Among these the most indefatigable was Dr. Sutherland, a sanitary expert, who for more than thirty years acted as her confidential private secretary, and surrendered to her purposes literally the whole of his life. Thus sustained and assisted, thus slaved for and adored, she prepared to beard the Bison.

Two facts soon emerged, and all that followed turned upon them. It became clear, in the first place, that that imposing mass was not immovable, and, in the second, that its movement, when it did move, would be exceedingly slow. The Bison was no match for the Lady. It was in vain that he put down his head and planted his feet in the earth; he could not withstand her; the white hand forced him back. But the process was an extraordinarily gradual one. Dr. Andrew Smith and all His War Office phalanx stood behind, blocking the way; the poor Bison groaned inwardly, and cast a wistful eye towards the happy pastures of the Free Church of Scotland; then slowly, with infinite reluctance, step by step, he retreated, disputing every inch of the ground.

The first great measure, which, supported as it was by the Queen, the Cabinet, and the united opinion of the country, it was impossible to resist, was the appointment of a Royal Commission to report upon the health of the Army. The question of the composition of the Commission then immediately arose; and it was over this matter that the first hand-to-hand encounter between Lord Panmure and Miss Nightingale took place. They met, and Miss Nightingale was victorious; Sidney Herbert was appointed Chairman; and, in the end the only member of the Commission opposed to her views was Dr. Andrew Smith. During the interview, Miss Nightingale made an important discovery: she found that "the Bison was bullyable"—the hide was the

hide of a Mexican buffalo, but the spirit was the spirit of an Alderney calf. And there was one thing above all others which the huge creature dreaded—an appeal to public opinion. The faintest hint of such a terrible eventuality made his heart dissolve within him; he would agree to anything—he would cut short his grouse-shooting—he would make a speech in the House of Lords—he would even overrule Dr. Andrew Smith—rather than that. Miss Nightingale held the fearful threat in reserve—she would speak out what she knew; she would publish the truth to the whole world, and let the whole world judge between them. With supreme skill, she kept this sword of Damocles poised above the Bison's head, and more than once she was actually on the point of really dropping it. For his recalcitrancy grew and grew. The *personnel* of the Commission once determined upon, there was a struggle, which lasted for six months, over the nature of its powers. Was it to be an efficient body, armed with the right of full inquiry and wide examination, or was it to be a polite official contrivance for exonerating Dr. Andrew Smith? The War Office phalanx closed its ranks, and fought tooth and nail; but it was defeated: the Bison was bullyable.

Three months from this day [Miss Nightingale had written at last] I publish my experience of the Crimean Campaign, and my suggestions for improvement, unless there has been a fair and tangible pledge by that time for reform.

Who could face that?

And, if the need came, she meant to be as good as her word. For she had now determined, whatever might be the fate of the Commission, to draw up her own report upon the questions at issue. The labour involved was enormous; her health was almost desperate; but she did not flinch, and after six months of incredible industry she had put together and written with her own hand her "Notes affecting the Health, Efficiency, and Hospital Administration of the British Army." This extraordinary composition, filling more than eight hundred closely printed pages, laying down vast principles of far-reaching reform, discussing the minutest details of a multitude of controversial subjects, containing an enormous mass of information of the most varied kinds—military, statistical, sanitary, architectural—was never given to the public, for the need never came; but it formed the basis of the Report of the Royal Commission; and it remains to this day the leading authority on the medical administration of armies.

Before it had been completed the struggle over the powers of the Commission had been brought to a victorious close. Lord Panmure had given way once more; he had immediately hurried to the Queen

to obtain her consent; and only then, when her Majesty's initials had been irrevocably affixed to the fatal document, did he dare to tell Dr. Andrew Smith what he had done. The Commission met, and another immense load fell upon Miss Nightingale's shoulders. Today she would, of course, have been one of the Commission herself; but at that time the idea of a woman appearing in such a capacity was unheard of; and no one even suggested the possibility of Miss Nightingale's doing so. The result was that she was obliged to remain behind the scenes throughout, to coach Sidney Herbert in private at every important juncture, and to convey to him and to her other friends upon the Commission the vast funds of her expert knowledge—so essential in the examination of witnesses—by means of innumerable consultations, letters, and memoranda. It was even doubtful whether the proprieties would admit of her giving evidence; and at last, as a compromise, her modesty only allowed her to do so in the form of written answers to written questions. At length the grand affair was finished. The Commission's Report, embodying almost word for word the suggestions of Miss Nightingale, was drawn up by Sidney Herbert. Only one question remained to be answered—would anything, after all, be done? Or would the Royal Commission, like so many other Royal Commissions before and since, turn out to have achieved nothing but the concoction of a very fat blue-book on a very high shelf?

And so the last and the deadliest struggle with the Bison began. Six months had been spent in coercing him into granting the Commission effective powers; six more months were occupied by the work of the Commission; and now yet another six were to pass in extorting from him the means whereby the recommendations of the Commission might be actually carried out. But, in the end, the thing was done. Miss Nightingale seemed indeed, during these months, to be upon the very brink of death. Accompanied by the faithful Aunt Mai, she moved from place to place—to Hampstead, to Highgate, to Derbyshire, to Malvern—in what appeared to be a last desperate effort to find health somewhere; but she carried that with her which made health impossible. Her desire for work could now scarcely be distinguished from mania. At one moment she was writing a "last letter" to Sidney Herbert; at the next she was offering to go out to India to nurse the sufferers in the Mutiny. When Dr. Sutherland wrote, imploring her to take a holiday, she raved. Rest! —

I am lying without my head, without my claws, and you all peck at me. It is *de rigueur*, *d'obligation*, like the saying something to one's hat, when one goes into church, to say to me all that has been said to me 110 times

a day during the last three months. It is the *obligato* on the violin, and the twelve violins all practise it together, like the clocks striking 12 o'clock at night all over London, till I say like Xavier de Maistre, *Assez, je le sais, je ne le sais que trop*. I am not a penitent; but you are like the R. C. confessor, who says what is *de rigueur*. . . .

Her wits began to turn, and there was no holding her. She worked like a slave in a mine. She began to believe, as she had begun to believe at Scutari, that none of her fellow-workers had their hearts in the business; if they had, why did they not work as she did? She could only see slackness and stupidity around her. Dr. Sutherland, of course, was grotesquely muddle-headed; and Arthur Clough incurably lazy. Even Sidney Herbert . . . oh, yes, he had simplicity and candour and quickness of perception, no doubt; but he was an eclectic; and what could one hope for from a man who went away to fish in Ireland just when the Bison most needed bullying? As for the Bison himself he had fled to Scotland, where he remained buried for many months. The fate of the vital recommendation in the Commission's Report—the appointment of four Sub-Commissions charged with the duty of determining upon the details of the proposed reforms and of putting them into execution—still hung in the balance. The Bison consented to everything; and then, on a flying visit to London, withdrew his consent and hastily returned to Scotland. Then for many weeks all business was suspended; he had gout—gout in the hands, so that he could not write. "His gout was always handy," remarked Miss Nightingale. But eventually it was clear even to the Bison that the game was up, and the inevitable surrender came.

There was, however, one point in which he triumphed over Miss Nightingale. The building of Netley Hospital had been begun, under his orders, before her return to England. Soon after her arrival she examined the plans, and found that they reproduced all the worst faults of an out-of-date and mischievous system of hospital construction. She therefore urged that the matter should be reconsidered, and in the meantime building stopped. But the Bison was obdurate; it would be very expensive, and in any case it was too late. Unable to make any impression on him, and convinced of the extreme importance of the question, she determined to appeal to a higher authority. Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister; she had known him from her childhood; he was a near neighbour of her father's in the New Forest. She went down to the New Forest, armed with the plans of the proposed hospital and all the relevant information, stayed the night at Lord Palmerston's house, and convinced him of the necessity of rebuilding Netley.

It seems to me [Lord Palmerston wrote to Lord Panmure] that at Netley all consideration of what would best tend to the comfort and recovery of the patients has been sacrificed to the vanity of the architect, whose sole object has been to make a building which should cut a dash when looked at from the Southampton river. . . . Pray, therefore, stop all further progress in the work until the matter can be duly considered.

But the Bison was not to be moved by one peremptory letter, even if it was from the Prime Minister. He put forth all his power of procrastination, Lord Palmerston lost interest in the subject, and so the chief military hospital in England was triumphantly completed on unsanitary principles, with unventilated rooms, and with all the patients' windows facing northeast.

But now the time had come when the Bison was to trouble and to be troubled no more. A vote in the House of Commons brought about the fall of Lord Palmerston's Government, and Lord Panmure found himself at liberty to devote the rest of his life to the Free Church of Scotland. After a brief interval, Sidney Herbert became Secretary of State for War. Great was the jubilation in the Nightingale Cabinet; the day of achievement had dawned at last. The next two and a half years (1859-61) saw the introduction of the whole system of reforms for which Miss Nightingale had been struggling so fiercely—reforms which make Sidney Herbert's tenure of power at the War Office an important epoch in the history of the British Army. The four Sub-Commissions, firmly established under the immediate control of the Minister, and urged forward by the relentless perseverance of Miss Nightingale, set to work with a will. The barracks and the hospitals were remodelled; they were properly ventilated and warmed and lighted for the first time; they were given a water supply which actually supplied water, and kitchens where, strange to say, it was possible to cook. Then the great question of the Purveyor—that portentous functionary whose powers and whose lack of powers had weighed like a nightmare upon Scutari—was taken in hand, and new regulations were laid down, accurately defining his responsibilities and his duties. One Sub-Commission reorganised the medical statistics of the Army. Another established—in spite of the last convulsive efforts of the Department—an Army Medical School. Finally the Army Medical Department itself was completely reorganised; an administrative code was drawn up; and the great and novel principle was established that it was as much a part of the duty of the authorities to look after the soldier's health as to look after his sickness. Besides this, it was at last officially admitted that he had a moral and intellectual side. Coffee-rooms and

reading-rooms, gymnasiums and workshops were instituted. A new era did in truth appear to have begun. Already by 1861 the mortality in the army had decreased by one half since the days of the Crimea. It was no wonder that even vaster possibilities began now to open out before Miss Nightingale. One thing was still needed to complete and to assure her triumphs. The Army Medical Department was indeed reorganised; but the great central machine was still untouched. The War Office itself—!—If she could remould *that* nearer to her heart's desire—there indeed would be a victory! And until that final act was accomplished, how could she be certain that all the rest of her achievements might not, by some capricious turn of Fortune's wheel—a change of Ministry, perhaps, replacing Sidney Herbert by some puppet of the permanent official gang—be swept to limbo in a moment?

Meanwhile, still ravenous for more and yet more work, her activities had branched out into new directions. The army in India claimed her attention. A Sanitary Commission, appointed at her suggestion, and working under her auspices, did for our troops there what the four Sub-Commissions were doing for those at home. At the same time, these very years which saw her laying the foundations of the whole modern system of medical work in the army, saw her also beginning to bring her knowledge, her influence, and her activity into the service of the country at large. Her *Notes on Hospitals* (1859) revolutionised the theory of hospital construction and hospital management. She was immediately recognised as the leading expert upon all the questions involved; her advice flowed unceasingly and in all directions, so that there is no great hospital today which does not bear upon it the impress of her mind. Nor was this all. With the opening of the Nightingale Training School for Nurses at St. Thomas's Hospital (1860), she became the founder of modern nursing.

But a terrible crisis was now fast approaching. Sidney Herbert had consented to undertake the root and branch reform of the War Office. He had sallied forth into that tropical jungle of festooned obstructiveness, of intertwined irresponsibilities, of crouching prejudices, of abuses grown stiff and rigid with antiquity, which for so many years to come was destined to lure reforming ministers to their doom.

The War Office [said Miss Nightingale] is a very slow office, an enormously expensive office, and one in which the Minister's intentions can be entirely negatived by all his sub-departments, and those of each of the sub-departments by every other.

It was true; and, of course, at the first rumour of a change, the old phalanx of reaction was bristling with its accustomed spears. At its



head stood no longer Dr. Andrew Smith, who, some time since, had followed the Bison into outer darkness, but a yet more formidable figure, the permanent Under-Secretary himself, Sir Benjamin Hawes—Ben Hawes the Nightingale Cabinet irreverently dubbed him—a man remarkable even among civil servants for adroitness in baffling inconvenient inquiries, resource in raising false issues, and, in short, a consummate command of all the arts of officially sticking in the mud. "Our scheme will probably result in Ben Hawes's resignation," Miss Nightingale said; "and that is another of its advantages." Ben Hawes himself, however, did not quite see it in that light. He set himself to resist the wishes of the Minister by every means in his power. The struggle was long and desperate; and, as it proceeded, it gradually became evident to Miss Nightingale that something was the matter with Sidney Herbert. What was it? His health, never very strong, was, he said, in danger of collapsing under the strain of his work. But, after all, what is illness, when there is a War Office to be reorganised? Then he began to talk of retiring altogether from public life. The doctors were consulted, and declared that, above all things, what was necessary was rest. Rest! She grew seriously alarmed. Was it possible that, at the last moment, the crowning wreath of victory was to be snatched from her grasp? She was not to be put aside by doctors; they were talking nonsense; the necessary thing was not rest but the reform of the War Office; and, besides, she knew very well from her own case what one could do even when one was on the point of death. She expostulated vehemently, passionately: the goal was so near, so very near; he could not turn back now! At any rate, he could not resist Miss Nightingale. A compromise was arranged. Very reluctantly, he exchanged the turmoil of the House of Commons for the dignity of the House of Lords, and he remained at the War Office. She was delighted. "One fight more, the best and the last," she said.

For several more months the fight did indeed go on. But the strain upon him was greater even than she perhaps could realise. Besides the intestine war in his office, he had to face a constant battle in the Cabinet with Mr. Gladstone—a more redoubtable antagonist even than Ben Hawes—over the estimates. His health grew worse and worse. He was attacked by fainting-fits; and there were some days when he could only just keep himself going by gulps of brandy. Miss Nightingale spurred him forward with her encouragements and her admonitions, her zeal and her example. But at last his spirit began to sink as well as his body. He could no longer hope; he could no longer desire; it was useless, all useless; it was utterly impossible. He had failed. The dreadful moment came when the truth was forced upon him: he would never

be able to reform the War Office. But a yet more dreadful moment lay behind; he must go to Miss Nightingale and tell her that he was a failure, a beaten man.

Blessed are the merciful! What strange ironic prescience had led Prince Albert, in the simplicity of his heart, to choose that motto for the Crimean brooch? The words hold a double lesson; and, alas! when she brought herself to realise at length what was indeed the fact and what there was no helping, it was not in mercy that she turned upon her old friend.

Beaten! [she exclaimed]. Can't you see that you've simply thrown away the game? And with all the winning cards in your hands! And so noble a game! Sidney Herbert beaten! And beaten by Ben Hawes! It is a worse disgrace . . . [her full rage burst out at last] . . . a worse disgrace than the hospitals at Scutari.

He dragged himself away from her, dragged himself to Spa, hoping vainly for a return of health, and then, despairing, back again to England, to Wilton, to the majestic house standing there resplendent in the summer sunshine, among the great cedars which had lent their shade to Sir Philip Sidney, and all those familiar, darling haunts of beauty which he loved, each one of them, "as if they were persons"; and at Wilton he died. After having received the Eucharist he had become perfectly calm; then, almost unconscious, his lips were seen to be moving. Those about him bent down. "Poor Florence! Poor Florence!" they just caught. ". . . Our joint work . . . unfinished . . . tried to do . . ." and they could hear no more.

When the onward rush of a powerful spirit sweeps a weaker one to its destruction, the commonplaces of the moral judgment are better left unmade. If Miss Nightingale had been less ruthless, Sidney Herbert would not have perished; but then, she would not have been Miss Nightingale. The force that created was the force that destroyed. It was her Demon that was responsible. When the fatal news reached her, she was overcome by agony. In the revulsion of her feelings, she made a worship of the dead man's memory; and the facile instrument which had broken in her hand she spoke of for ever after as her "Master." Then, almost at the same moment, another blow fell upon her. Arthur Clough, worn out by labours very different from those of Sidney Herbert, died too: never more would he tie up her parcels. And yet a third disaster followed. The faithful Aunt Mai did not, to be sure, die; no, she did something almost worse: she left Miss Nightingale. She was growing old, and she felt that she had closer and more imperative duties with her own family. Her niece could hardly forgive

her. She poured out, in one of her enormous letters, a passionate diatribe upon the faithlessness, the lack of sympathy, the stupidity, the ineptitude of women. Her doctrines had taken no hold among them; she had never known one who had *appris à apprendre*; she could not even get a woman secretary; "they don't know the names of the Cabinet Ministers—they don't know which of the Churches has Bishops and which not." As for the spirit of self-sacrifice, well—Sidney Herbert and Arthur Clough were men, and they indeed had shown their devotion; but women—! She would mount three widow's caps "for a sign." The first two would be for Clough and for her Master; but the third, "the biggest widow's cap of all"—would be for Aunt Mai. She did well to be angry; she was deserted in her hour of need; and, after all, could she be sure that even the male sex was so impeccable? There was Dr. Sutherland, bungling as usual. Perhaps even he intended to go off, one of these days, too? She gave him a look, and he shivered in his shoes. No!—she grinned sardonically; she would always have Dr. Sutherland. And then she reflected that there was one thing more that she would always have—her work.

## IV

Sidney Herbert's death finally put an end to Miss Nightingale's dream of a reformed War Office. For a moment, indeed, in the first agony of her disappointment, she had wildly clutched at a straw; she had written to Mr. Gladstone to beg him to take up the burden of Sidney Herbert's work. And Mr. Gladstone had replied with a sympathetic account of the funeral.

Succeeding Secretaries of State managed between them to undo a good deal of what had been accomplished, but they could not undo it all; and for ten years more (1862-72) Miss Nightingale remained a potent influence at the War Office. After that, her direct connection with the army came to an end, and her energies began to turn more and more completely towards more general objects. Her work upon hospital reform assumed enormous proportions; she was able to improve the conditions in infirmaries and workhouses; and one of her most remarkable papers forestalls the recommendations of the Poor Law Commission of 1909. Her training school for nurses, with all that it involved in initiative, control, responsibility, and combat, would have been enough in itself to have absorbed the whole efforts of at least two lives of ordinary vigour. And at the same time her work in connection with India, which had begun with the Sanitary Commission on the Indian Army, spread and ramified in a multitude of directions. Her tentacles reached the India Office and succeeded in establishing a hold

even upon those slippery high places. For many years it was *de rigueur* for the newly appointed Viceroy, before he left England, to pay a visit to Miss Nightingale.

After much hesitation, she had settled down in a small house in South Street, where she remained for the rest of her life. That life was a very long one; the dying woman reached her ninety-first year. Her ill-health gradually diminished; the crises of extreme danger became less frequent, and at last, altogether ceased; she remained an invalid, but an invalid of a curious character—an invalid who was too weak to walk downstairs and who worked far harder than most Cabinet Ministers. Her illness, whatever it may have been, was certainly not inconvenient. It involved seclusion; and an extraordinary, an unparalleled seclusion was, it might almost have been said, the mainspring of Miss Nightingale's life. Lying on her sofa in the little upper room in South Street, she combined the intense vitality of a dominating woman of the world with the mysterious and romantic quality of a myth. She was a legend in her lifetime, and she knew it. She tasted the joys of power, like those Eastern Emperors whose autocratic rule was based upon invisibility, with the mingled satisfactions of obscurity and fame. And she found the machinery of illness hardly less effective as a barrier against the eyes of men than the ceremonial of a palace. Great statesmen and renowned generals were obliged to beg for audiences; admiring princesses from foreign countries found that they must see her at her own time, or not at all; and the ordinary mortal had no hope of ever getting beyond the downstairs sitting-room and Dr. Sutherland. For that indefatigable disciple did, indeed, never desert her. He might be impatient, he might be restless, but he remained. His "incurable looseness of thought," for so she termed it, continued at her service to the end. Once, it is true, he had actually ventured to take a holiday; but he was recalled, and he did not repeat the experiment. He was wanted downstairs. There he sat, transacting business, answering correspondence, interviewing callers, and exchanging innumerable notes with the unseen power above. Sometimes word came down that Miss Nightingale was just well enough to see one of her visitors. The fortunate man was led up, was ushered, trembling, into the shaded chamber, and, of course, could never afterwards forget the interview. Very rarely, indeed, once or twice a year, perhaps, but nobody could be quite certain, in deadly secrecy, Miss Nightingale went out for a drive in the Park. Unrecognised, the living legend flitted for a moment before the common gaze. And the precaution was necessary; for there were times when, at some public function, the rumour of her presence was spread abroad; and ladies, mistaken by the crowd for Miss Night-

ingale, were followed, pressed upon, and vehemently supplicated—"Let me touch your shawl,"—"Let me stroke your arm"; such was the strange adoration in the hearts of the people. That vast reserve of force lay there behind her; she could use it, if she would. But she preferred never to use it. On occasions, she might hint or threaten; she might balance the sword of Damocles over the head of the Bison; she might, by a word, by a glance, remind some refractory minister, some unpersuadable viceroy, sitting in audience with her in the little upper room, that she was something more than a mere sick woman, that she had only, so to speak, to go to the window and wave her handkerchief, for . . . dreadful things to follow. But that was enough; they understood; the myth was there—obvious, portentous, impalpable; and so it remained to the last.

With statesmen and governors at her beck and call, with her hands on a hundred strings, with mighty provinces at her feet, with foreign governments agog for her counsel, building hospitals, training nurses—she still felt that she had not enough to do. She sighed for more worlds to conquer—more, and yet more. She looked about her—what was there left? Of course! Philosophy! After the world of action, the world of thought. Having set right the health of the British Army, she would now do the same good service for the religious convictions of mankind. She had long noticed—with regret—the growing tendency towards free-thinking among artisans. With regret, but not altogether with surprise: the current teaching of Christianity was sadly to seek; nay, Christianity itself was not without its defects. She would rectify these errors. She would correct the mistakes of the Churches; she would point out just where Christianity was wrong; and she would explain to the artisans what the facts of the case really were. Before her departure for the Crimea, she had begun this work; and now, in the intervals of her other labours, she completed it. Her *Suggestions for Thought to the Searchers after Truth among the Artisans of England* (1860) unravels, in the course of three portly volumes, the difficulties—hitherto, curiously enough, unsolved—connected with such matters as Belief in God, the Plan of Creation, the Origin of Evil, the Future Life, Necessity and Free Will, Law, and the Nature of Morality. The Origin of Evil, in particular, held no perplexities for Miss Nightingale. "We cannot conceive," she remarks, "that Omnipotent Righteousness would find satisfaction in *solitary existence*." This being so, the only question remaining to be asked is, "What beings should we then conceive that God would create?" Now, He cannot create perfect beings, "since, essentially, perfection is one"; if He did so, He would only be adding to Himself. Thus the conclusion is obvi-

ous: He *must* create *imperfect* ones. Omnipotent Righteousness, faced by the intolerable *impasse* of a solitary existence, finds itself bound, by the very nature of the case, to create the hospitals at Scutari. Whether this argument would have satisfied the artisans was never discovered, for only a very few copies of the book were printed for private circulation. One copy was sent to Mr. Mill, who acknowledged it in an extremely polite letter. He felt himself obliged, however, to confess that he had not been altogether convinced by Miss Nightingale's proof of the existence of God. Miss Nightingale was surprised and mortified; she had thought better of Mr. Mill; for surely her proof of the existence of God could hardly be improved upon. "A law," she had pointed out, "implies a lawgiver." Now the Universe is full of laws—the law of gravitation, the law of the excluded middle, and many others; hence it follows that the Universe has a lawgiver—and what would Mr. Mill be satisfied with, if he was not satisfied with that?

Perhaps Mr. Mill might have asked why the argument had not been pushed to its logical conclusion. Clearly, if we are to trust the analogy of human institutions, we must remember that laws are, as a matter of fact, not dispensed by lawgivers, but passed by Act of Parliament. Miss Nightingale, however, with all her experience of public life, never stopped to consider the question whether God might not be a Limited Monarchy.

Yet her conception of God was certainly not orthodox. She felt towards Him as she might have felt towards a glorified sanitary engineer; and in some of her speculations she seems hardly to distinguish between the Deity and the Drains. As one turns over these singular pages, one has the impression that Miss Nightingale has got the Almighty too into her clutches, and that, if He is not careful, she will kill Him with overwork.

Then, suddenly, in the very midst of the ramifying generalities of her metaphysical disquisitions there is an unexpected turn, and the reader is plunged all at once into something particular, something personal, something impregnated with intense experience—a virulent invective upon the position of women in the upper ranks of society. Forgetful alike of her high argument and of the artisans, the bitter creature rails through a hundred pages of close print at the falsities of family life, the ineptitudes of marriage, the emptinesses of convention, in the spirit of an Ibsen or a Samuel Butler. Her fierce pen, shaking with intimate anger, depicts in biting sentences the fearful fate of an unmarried girl in a wealthy household. It is a *cri du cœur*; and then, as suddenly, she returns once more to instruct the artisans upon the nature of Omnipotent Righteousness.

Her mind was, indeed, better qualified to dissect the concrete and distasteful fruits of actual life than to construct a coherent system of abstract philosophy. In spite of her respect for Law, she was never at home with a generalisation. Thus, though the great achievement of her life lay in the immense impetus which she gave to the scientific treatment of sickness, a true comprehension of the scientific method itself was alien to her spirit. Like most great men of action—perhaps like all—she was simply an empiricist. She believed in what she saw, and she acted accordingly; beyond that she would not go. She had found in Scutari that fresh air and light played an effective part in the prevention of the maladies with which she had to deal; and that was enough for her; she would not inquire further; what were the general principles underlying that fact—or even whether there were any—she refused to consider. Years after the discoveries of Pasteur and Lister, she laughed at what she called the “germ-fetish.” There was no such thing as “infection”; she had never seen it, therefore it did not exist. But she *had* seen the good effects of fresh air; therefore there could be no doubt about them; and therefore it was essential that the bedrooms of patients should be well ventilated. Such was her doctrine; and in those days of hermetically sealed windows it was a very valuable one. But it was a purely empirical doctrine, and thus it led to some unfortunate results. When, for instance, her influence in India was at its height, she issued orders that all hospital windows should be invariably kept open. The authorities, who knew what an open window in the hot weather meant, protested, but in vain; Miss Nightingale was incredulous. She knew nothing of the hot weather, but she did know the value of fresh air—from personal experience; the authorities were talking nonsense and the windows must be kept open all the year round. There was a great outcry from all the doctors in India, but she was firm; and for a moment it seemed possible that her terrible commands would have to be put into execution. Lord Lawrence, however, was Viceroy, and he was able to intimate to Miss Nightingale, with sufficient authority, that he himself had decided upon the question, and that his decision must stand, even against her own. Upon that, she gave way, but reluctantly and quite unconvinced; she was only puzzled by the unexpected weakness of Lord Lawrence. No doubt, if she had lived today, and if her experience had lain, not among cholera cases at Scutari but among yellow-fever cases in Panama, she would have declared fresh air a fetish, and would have maintained to her dying day that the only really effective way of dealing with disease was by the destruction of mosquitoes.

Yet her mind, so positive, so realistic, so ultra-practical, had its singu-

lar revulsions, its mysterious moods of mysticism and of doubt. At times, lying sleepless in the early hours, she fell into long strange agonised meditations, and then, seizing a pencil, she would commit to paper the confessions of her soul. The morbid longings of her pre-Crimean days came over her once more; she filled page after page with self-examination, self-criticism, self-surrender. "O Father," she wrote, "I submit, I resign myself, I accept with all my heart this stretching out of Thy hand to save me. . . . O how vain it is, the vanity of vanities, to live in men's thoughts instead of God's!" She was lonely, she was miserable. "Thou knowest that through all these horrible twenty years, I have been supported by the belief that I was working with Thee who wert bringing everyone, even our poor nurses, to perfection,"—and yet, after all, what was the result? Had not even she been an unprofitable servant? One night, waking suddenly, she saw, in the dim light of the night-lamp, tenebrous shapes upon the wall. The past rushed back upon her. "Am I she who once stood on that Crimean height?" she wildly asked—"The Lady with a lamp shall stand. . . . The lamp shows me only my utter shipwreck."

She sought consolation in the writings of the Mystics and in a correspondence with Mr. Jowett. For many years the Master of Balliol acted as her spiritual adviser. He discussed with her in a series of enormous letters the problems of religion and philosophy; he criticised her writings on those subjects with the tactful sympathy of a cleric who was also a man of the world; and he even ventured to attempt at times to instil into her rebellious nature some of his own peculiar suavity. "I sometimes think," he told her, "that you ought seriously to consider how your work may be carried on, not with less energy, but in a calmer spirit. I am not blaming the past. . . . But I want the peace of God to settle on the future." He recommended her to spend her time no longer in "conflicts with Government offices," and to take up some literary work. He urged her to "work out her notion of Divine Perfection," in a series of essays for *Frazer's Magazine*. She did so; and the result was submitted to Mr. Froude, who pronounced the second essay to be "even more pregnant than the first. I cannot tell," he said, "how sanitary, with disordered intellects, the effects of such papers will be." Mr. Carlyle, indeed, used different language, and some remarks of his about a lost lamb bleating on the mountains having been unfortunately repeated to Miss Nightingale, all Mr. Jowett's suavity was required to keep the peace. In a letter of fourteen sheets, he turned her attention from this painful topic towards a discussion of Quietism. "I don't see why," said the Master of Balliol, "active life might not become a sort of passive life too." And then, he added, "I sometimes



fancy there are possibilities of human character much greater than have been realised." She found such sentiments helpful, underlining them in blue pencil; and, in return, she assisted her friend with a long series of elaborate comments upon the Dialogues of Plato, most of which he embodied in the second edition of his translation. Gradually her interest became more personal; she told him never to work again after midnight, and he obeyed her. Then she helped him to draw up a special form of daily service for the College Chapel, with selections from the Psalms, under the heads of "God the Lord, God the Judge, God the Father, and God the Friend,"—though, indeed, this project was never realised; for the Bishop of Oxford disallowed the alterations, exercising his legal powers, on the advice of Sir Travers Twiss.

Their relations became intimate. "The spirit of the twenty-third psalm and the spirit of the nineteenth psalm should be united in our lives," Mr. Jowett said. Eventually, she asked him to do her a singular favour. Would he, knowing what he did of her religious views, come to London and administer to her the Holy Sacrament? He did not hesitate, and afterwards declared that he would always regard the occasion as a solemn event in his life. He was devoted to her; though the precise nature of his feelings towards her never quite transpired. Her feelings towards him were more mixed. At first, he was "that great and good man,"—"that true saint, Mr. Jowett"; but, as time went on, some gall was mingled with the balm; the acrimony of her nature asserted itself. She felt that she gave more sympathy than she received; she was exhausted, she was annoyed, by his conversation. Her tongue, one day, could not refrain from shooting out at him. "He comes to me, and he talks to me," she said, "as if I were someone else."

## v

At one time she had almost decided to end her life in retirement, as a patient at St. Thomas's Hospital. But partly owing to the persuasions of Mr. Jowett, she changed her mind; for forty-five years she remained in South Street; and in South Street she died. As old age approached, though her influence with the official world gradually diminished, her activities seemed to remain as intense and widespread as before. When hospitals were to be built, when schemes of sanitary reform were in agitation, when wars broke out, she was still the adviser of all Europe. Still, with a characteristic self-assurance, she watched from her Mayfair bedroom over the welfare of India. Still, with an indefatigable enthusiasm, she pushed forward the work, which, perhaps, was nearer to her heart, more completely her own, than all the rest—the training of nurses. In her moments of deepest depression, when her

greatest achievements seemed to lose their lustre, she thought of her nurses, and was comforted. The ways of God, she found, were strange indeed. "How inefficient I was in the Crimea," she noted. "Yet He has raised up from it trained nursing."

At other times she was better satisfied. Looking back, she was amazed by the enormous change which, since her early days, had come over the whole treatment of illness, the whole conception of public and domestic health—a change in which, she knew, she had played her part. One of her Indian admirers, the Aga Khan, came to visit her. She expatiated on the marvellous advances she had lived to see in the management of hospitals, in drainage, in ventilation, in sanitary work of every kind. There was a pause; and then, "Do you think you are improving?" asked the Aga Khan. She was a little taken aback, and said, "What do you mean by 'improving'?" He replied, "Believing more in God." She saw that he had a view of God which was different from hers. "A most interesting man," she noted after the interview; "but you could never teach him sanitation."

When old age actually came, something curious happened. Destiny, having waited very patiently, played a queer trick on Miss Nightingale. The benevolence and public spirit of that long life had only been equalled by its acerbity. Her virtue had dwelt in hardness, and she had poured forth her unstinted usefulness with a bitter smile upon her lips. And now the sarcastic years brought the proud woman her punishment. She was not to die as she had lived. The sting was to be taken out of her: she was to be made soft; she was to be reduced to compliance and complacency. The change came gradually, but at last it was unmistakable. The terrible commander who had driven Sidney Herbert to his death, to whom Mr. Jowett had applied the words of Homer, *ἄμωτον μεμαῖνα*—raging insatiably—now accepted small compliments with gratitude, and indulged in sentimental friendships with young girls. The author of "*Notes on Nursing*"—that classical compendium of the besetting sins of the sisterhood, drawn up with the detailed acrimony, the vindictive relish, of a Swift—now spent long hours in composing sympathetic Addresses to Probationers, whom she petted and wept over in turn. And, at the same time, there appeared a corresponding alteration in her physical mould. The thin, angular woman, with her haughty eye and her acrid mouth had vanished; and in her place was the rounded bulky form of a fat old lady, smiling all day long. Then something else became visible. The brain which had been steeled at Scutari was indeed, literally, growing soft. Senility—an ever more and more amiable senility—descended. Towards the end, consciousness itself grew lost in a roseate haze, and melted into nothing-

ness. It was just then, three years before her death, when she was eighty-seven years old (1907), that those in authority bethought them that the opportune moment had come for bestowing a public honour on Florence Nightingale. She was offered the Order of Merit. That Order, whose roll contains, among other distinguished names, those of Sir Laurence Alma Tadema and Sir Edward Elgar, is remarkable chiefly for the fact that, as its title indicates, it is bestowed because its recipient deserves it, and for no other reason. Miss Nightingale's representatives accepted the honour, and her name, after a lapse of many years, once more appeared in the Press. Congratulations from all sides came pouring in. There was a universal burst of enthusiasm—a final revivification of the ancient myth. Among her other admirers, the German Emperor took this opportunity of expressing his feelings towards her. "His Majesty," wrote the German Ambassador, "having just brought to a close a most enjoyable stay in the beautiful neighbourhood of your old home near Romsey, has commanded me to present you with some flowers as a token of his esteem." Then, by Royal command, the Order of Merit was brought to South Street, and there was a little ceremony of presentation. Sir Douglas Dawson, after a short speech, stepped forward, and handed the insignia of the Order to Miss Nightingale. Propped up by pillows, she dimly recognised that some compliment was being paid her. "Too kind—too kind," she murmured; and she was not ironical.

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# John Brown

GAMALIEL BRADFORD (1863-1932)

Gamaliel Bradford was a direct descendant of William Bradford, Governor of Plymouth Plantation. He was born in Boston, he matriculated at Harvard, and in the nearby village of Wellesley Hills he lived for over sixty years in the same house. Yet he was not the story-book New Englander anchored to Boston by provincial pride. There were other reasons for his Bay State isolation. One was a frail physique which made him leave college when he had scarcely begun and kept him a semi-invalid for life; another was a painful shyness which drove him almost out of the world of living men. He went, to be sure, to the Opera House and the playhouse and faithfully followed athletics. But even in the sacred temple of American extroversion he remained an introvert: "As I watched the Boston Braves beat Brooklyn yesterday [he confided to his journal], I meditated, as I often do at such contests, on the complicated and subtle psychological problems which attend our interest as spectators of them." Outside of his beloved house and garden in Wellesley Hills, his favorite haunt was a private library, the Boston Athenæum. There he pursued his lifetime passion for reading. There his "book friendships," as he himself admitted, spoiled him completely for the flesh and blood friendships of the busy world outside. "I should like," he once wrote, "to be buried in the Athenæum."

Bradford did not always want to be a biographer. He began to specialize in biography only after he had become suspicious, if never thoroughly convinced, that he was not born to be a poet, a novelist, or a playwright. Nor was he born to be a great biographer. He knew, if some of his critics did not, that the genius of Lytton Strachey glittered far above his own earth-bound competence:

The Strachey *Queen Victoria* and the *Essex* overwhelm me with absolute despair. . . . At every page I am devoured with poignant bitterness and distress to think how utterly my life has been wasted and how incapable I am of ever achieving anything of what this extraordinary master does at the first touch.

But he had one useful qualification for writing besides a passion for reading. That was an incredible power of self-discipline which made him budget his time like a machine. His *Journal* contains a record of "chronomania" which matches those in the journal of Arnold Bennett and the autobiography of Anthony Trollope. Every circuit of the clock from rising to retiring is cut like a pie into segments of required reading and writing. Bradford regularly performed the inhuman task of allotting himself thirty minutes to read in a detective novel and stopping on the dot with the dagger poised above the victim. His reading pro-

gram for a single evening is like the index to an anthology of world literature:

Last night, first a little of *The Alchemist*, then a little of Walpole's Letters, then a little of Sainte-Beuve, then an act of Molière, then two or three of Madame du Deffand's Letters, then De Banville's poetry, then a novel of Oppenheim, then Memoirs of Madame de Staël, Delaundry, then *Don Quixote*.

It is no wonder that this man turned out between 1912 and 1932 four full-length biographies, one full-length autobiography besides the *Journal*, and one hundred fifteen short biographies, not to mention novels, poems, plays, and critical essays.

The subjects of these biographies indicate the wide range of Bradford's reading. The long studies are of Robert E. Lee (1912), Samuel Pepys (1924), Charles Darwin (1926) and Dwight L. Moody (1927). The short biographies fill fourteen volumes: *Confederate Portraits* (1914), *Union Portraits* (1916), *Portraits of Women* (1916), *A Naturalist of Souls* (1917), *Portraits of American Women* (1919), *American Portraits, 1875-1900* (1922), *Damaged Souls* (including "John Brown," 1923), *Bare Souls* (1924), *Wives* (1925), *As God Made Them* (1929), *Daughters of Eve* (1930), *The Quick and the Dead* (1931), *Saints and Sinners* (1932), *Biography and the Human Heart* (1932). Here are included short studies of men of action like Theodore Roosevelt and men of contemplation like Professor F. J. Child, practical men like P. T. Barnum and dreamers like John Brown, good men like Henry Adams and bad men like Caesar Borgia, women in the home like Dolly Madison and women of the world like Catherine the Great. With these and a hundred more Bradford lived for twenty years. How could he talk about the market with the Brahmins of Back Bay?

If Bradford was catholic in his choice of subjects, he placed the most exacting limitations on his approach to them. He called himself a "psychographer." The word was not new, but he used it in a specific sense and clarified his meaning in a series of essays. "Psychography" differs from orthodox biography in that it "breaks away at once and entirely from the chronological sequence." It differs from the conventional portrait (or effort to depict a man at any given point in time) because it acknowledges "the fluidity, the mobility, the versatility of the human spirit." It seeks to avoid the common dangers of biography: excessive gossip, excessive background, and "irrelevance," the last of which Bradford characterized as the biographer's "fatal tendency to use his subject as a mere pretext for pushing some political, or aesthetic dogma or theory." The psychographer's sole object is "to get rid of the temporal, the epochal, and to distil from a man's whole life the large, permanent essence of his soul." To do this he singles out certain universal human elements—love, ambition, religion, money, etc.—which are likely to affect all men, great and small. The "psychograph" consists of testing the human specimen by these touchstones, one by

one. The psychographer becomes, if not a qualified psychoanalyst, a careful scientist, using the scientific method, a "naturalist of souls."

Bradford too often insulated his subjects from the social currents of their time as he himself was insulated from his own. Aware of the danger of "excessive background," he many times wrote biography with no background at all, the psychography of a soul suspended in Limbo. Although he sometimes fashioned an effective phrase, his style is usually pedestrian, his patient census-taking often monotonous. But within his limits he was a conscientious seeker after truth and justice in portraying humanity. Certain modern biographers of greater brilliance have not always bothered about such quaint, old fashioned virtues.

### CHRONOLOGY

*Born, Torrington, Litchfield County, Connecticut, May 9, 1800.*

*Married Dianthe Lusk, June 21, 1820.*

*Various business ventures and migrations, 1820-1855.*

*Wife died, August 10, 1832.*

*Married Mary Anne Day, 1833.*

*Arrived in Kansas, October, 1855.*

*Pottawatomie murders, May 24, 1856.*

*Chatham Convention, April-May, 1858.*

*Carried slaves to Canada, February-March, 1859.*

*Established at Kennedy Farm, July, 1859.*

*Raid began, October 16, 1859.*

*Captured, October 18, 1859.*

*Sentenced, November 2, 1859.*

*Executed, Charlestown, Virginia, December 2, 1859.*

### I

IT IS ALWAYS PROFOUNDLY INTERESTING to study a controversy where there is right on both sides, though neither can see the right in the other. In the American Civil War the South, with however little fault of its own, was oppressed, smothered by the hideous burden of slavery. On the other hand, it was contending for the original principle of state vitality, the most important element in our Constitution, and one steadily undermined by Federal encroachment and above all by the War.

Up to 1861, the most intense complication of these contending principles was in Kansas. There right and wrong fought their battle with furious bitterness and with a heat of wrath and recrimination which is as pitiful as it is fascinating to behold. And into this thick and bushy tangle of motives and passions John Brown hewed unhesi-

From *Damaged Souls*, by Gamaliel Bradford. Reprinted by permission of Houghton, Mifflin Company, publishers.

tatingly with the fierce and cruel axe of his unfaltering will. But, as it happens, Brown himself is as complex a puzzle as Kansas, and friends and enemies have torn his memory to pieces in the effort to make out devil or saint; whereas he was neither, but a human being, with immense aspirations and hopes and struggles, like you or me. In any case, he was perhaps the most curious American example of the intensity of fanatical enthusiasm, and as such the analysis of his soul, with its damage and its glory, has a profound and absorbing interest.

Before beginning such analysis, however, we must have a brief summary of his remarkable career, avoiding controversy as much as is possible, where many facts and almost all motives are subject to contest. In making such a summary, we must first acknowledge indebtedness to the admirable biography of Mr. Villard, whose thoroughness of research is equaled only by his obvious desire to be fair to all parties and all men.

Brown was born in Connecticut in 1800. His parents were of English and Dutch stock and his stubbornness through life did not belie his heredity. He had a severe and sternly nurtured youth, growing up with the Bible in one hand and the plough in the other. In later life he wrote a brief autobiography, which depicts the struggles of his youth in the terse, tense, rude English he always used. All through it you can see the earnest, passionate, obstinate boy, with his soul set on one object, all the more furiously when he found himself balked.

The boy was married when a boy, chased fortune in strange fashion all over the country, as a tanner, as a surveyor, as a cattle-breeder, as a wool-merchant, and never once caught her. He had and bred and lost children, lost his wife, married another and had more children, il-limitably. How he fed them all is a puzzle. But their feeding was simple, and their lives were simple, and their souls were simple, like his, if all souls were not so bewilderingly complex. Through these financial struggles it comes out increasingly evident that Brown was not a good man of business, though often shrewd and practical, as in his skilful classification of wools. His temperament was speculative, fed on high hopes, if little else. He worked with borrowed capital, his schemes failed, and he came to grief, like many others. Most of us believe that he was fundamentally honest. But some do not. It may be well to quote here the most scathing piece of abuse that I have met with, as an antidote to much that will come later: "I knew the old scoundrel long before the war; long before Kansas was known; long before abolition had many advocates. He tried to blow up his mother-in-law with powder; he was guilty of every meanness. He involved his father at one time in ruin, and everybody else he had anything to do

with."<sup>1</sup> So do the saints and martyrs appear to those who have suffered by them.

But if the practical world rejected Brown and misunderstood him, the unpractical had its revenge in yielding him immortal glory. He gave his life with mad abandonment to the American negro and that sacrifice raised him on a pedestal no envy and no detraction will ever throw down. Just when Brown's devotion to the abolition cause began cannot be definitely settled. In later years he and his family placed it very early. Mr. H. P. Wilson, who has dissected Brown's soul with searching and ingenious cruelty, but I think with utter misapprehension, believes that this early origin was invented,<sup>2</sup> and that Brown's anti-slavery enthusiasm was merely a hypocritical mask, to conceal the old greed for gain which had been in so many ways disappointed. I do not see how any one who has studied Brown's life and letters with care can question his sincerity for a moment, and I believe, after a consideration of all the evidence, that the passion for freeing the slaves was early conceived and grew and broadened with years until, when he was nearly sixty years old, it broke out in the wild adventures of Kansas and Harper's Ferry.

Several of Brown's sons went to Kansas in 1854 and 1855. They were led in part, no doubt, by the enthusiasm of the free-soil movement, largely also by the instinct of adventure and of seeking fortune under new conditions. Their father was interested in their project from the first. He heard of the violence and aggression of the pro-slavery men, who were thronging into the territory from Missouri, left his wife and other children at his farm in North Elba, New York, and made his way to Kansas, well-armed, eager to help his sons, and passionately curious to see what would turn up. When he arrived, the struggle between the political parties was violently under way. Accounts vary as to the prominence of his earlier part in it. He was never a man to work with others, much less under them. He could contend, command, control: he could not obey. At any rate, he was intimately involved in the furious complications of the end of 1855 and the beginning of 1856, and his antipathy to the advocates of slavery increased in bitterness, if it could. There was wrath and recrimination everywhere, some unwarranted violence, and a luxury of threats, meaning much or little, but all serving to foment hatred. Brown made up his mind that a cruel example was needed. In May, 1856, he and a party of his followers took by night five pro-slavery men from among their

<sup>1</sup> Letter of N. Eggleston, October, 1883, in Sara T. D. Robinson, *Kansas* (edition, 1899), p. 414.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, p. 44. [Wilson, Hill Peebles, *John Brown: Soldier of Fortune.*]



Pottawatomie neighbors, men of bad character but not more criminal than others, and butchered them, literally hacked them to pieces with cutlasses. Brown always insisted, in a fashion approaching duplicity, that he had no actual hand in the deed; but the whole responsibility was his. In any case, it was a bloody, brutal murder, and quite without immediate excuse. Brown's admirers declare that it saved Kansas to freedom. Less prejudiced historians believe that it did more harm than good.

Brown's course in the west after Pottawatomie was much what it had been before. He was engaged in several so-called battles, with a few men on each side, and behaved always with absolute intrepidity and sometimes with shrewdness. Mr. Wilson insists that his chief motive was plunder. There was plenty of disreputable plundering on both sides, horse-stealing in particular. But there can be no serious doubt that Brown regarded it all as a worthy despoiling of the Egyptians and intended religiously to devote all profit to the advancement of the cause.

In the autumn of 1856 Brown left Kansas. The year 1857 he spent in the Middle West and East, gathering funds and arousing enthusiasm in various societies and individuals, with the ostensible purpose of aiding in the Kansas struggle, but with at any rate some further and deeper plans for a more central attack upon the strongholds of slavery. In the summer of 1858 he returned to Kansas, where conditions were again acute, made a raid into Missouri, captured a considerable number of slaves, and, after a journey full of picturesque vicissitudes, carried them triumphantly to Canada where the British flag ensured their permanent freedom. John Brown never entered Kansas again.

## II

As there is endless controversy over the date of Brown's first interest in slavery, so historians dispute over his conception of the Harper's Ferry adventure. If the conversation recorded by Frederick Douglass as having taken place in 1847 is to be accepted<sup>8</sup>—and I think it must be in substance—Brown was at that time brooding over the details of some such scheme as he afterwards attempted to carry out. He explained to Douglass this plan for subsisting an army of whites and blacks in the mountain fastnesses and so gradually undermining the whole slave power. In 1849 he made a brief trip to Europe for business objects and he appears to have attempted a more or less extensive study of battles and battle-fields with a military purpose in mind. For, though he was profoundly religious and by profession a hater of war, like

<sup>8</sup> *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* (edition, 1883), p. 337.

many another such he was a born fighter, and relished nothing more than to have God put a scourge into his hands to lash the devil.

His daughter testifies explicitly that he told her of his Harper's Ferry plan before he first went to Kansas.<sup>4</sup> In the interval between his two Kansas visits the general outline of the scheme was certainly made more or less plain to some of his Eastern supporters. And in May, 1858, took place in Chatham, Canada, that singular convention of a few whites and a larger number of negroes, which adopted the still more singular Provisional Constitution,<sup>5</sup> Brown's elaborate device for governing the nation within a nation that was to be established by the gradual freeing of the Southern slaves. This instrument, with its lofty tone and its complicated discrimination of executive, legislature, judiciary, etc., seems like a Utopian parody of the Constitution of the United States, developed by a slow, thorough, narrow, limited intellect possessed and obsessed by one idea, and such was assuredly Brown's.

Any hope the inventor of this system may have had of putting it immediately into practice was thwarted by the defection of the restless, unreliable adventurer Forbes, who, after being more trusted by his leader than was any one else, deserted the cause and made perilous revelations as to the methods. Brown was obliged to defer action for a year; but his patience was as indomitable as his energy. "Young men must learn to wait. Patience is the hardest lesson to learn. I have waited for twenty years to accomplish my purpose."<sup>6</sup>

At last in the summer of 1859 Brown settled himself and his little band of followers at the Kennedy Farm in Maryland, about five miles from Harper's Ferry. The followers were a somewhat heterogeneous collection. They were by no means all religious men. Perhaps they had not all been virtuous men. They were hardy, vigorous young fellows, ready to risk anything and go anywhere. Most, if not all, of them, had a superstitious horror of slavery. And every one of them adored the old man and was willing to die for him. Just what plan of campaign Brown had adopted, if any definite, will never be known. His friends and his enemies have ingeniously supplied him with several and supported them with what they think are conclusive arguments. But the arguments are as different as the conclusions and none is convincing. Somehow or other Brown hoped to gather a nucleus of slaves and whites whose determined action in seizing Harper's Ferry would finally lead to the liberation of every Southern negro. But the method of accomplishing this is obscure, and we are obliged largely to fall

<sup>4</sup> F. B. Sanborn, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, vol. I, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> Printed in Wilson, Appendix III.

<sup>6</sup> Richard D. Webb, *The Life and Letters of Captain John Brown*, p. 106.

back upon Brown's trust in the guidance of God. On the one hand we are told by Salmon Brown that "Father had a peculiarity of insisting on *order*. I felt that at Harper's Ferry this very thing would be likely to trap him. He would insist on getting everything arranged just to suit him before he would consent to make a move."<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, we have Brown's own impressive saying: "It is an invariable rule *with me* to be governed by circumstances; or in other words *not to do anything while I do not know what to do*."<sup>8</sup> No doubt these two positions may be reconciled, but they do not make our puzzle much clearer.

At any rate, the conspirators, about twenty in all, lurked at the Kennedy Farm till the middle of October, slowly accumulating arms and supplies and keeping themselves marvelously hidden from the neighbors' curiosity. Then, on the evening of Sunday, October 16th, Brown marched out, at the head of a petty band of adventurers, to challenge deliberately a great nation by assaulting its officers and seizing its property. The complicated evolutions of Sunday night and Monday need not be traced in detail. By Monday night not only the town of Harper's Ferry but the State of Virginia and the whole country had been aroused and had grasped, at least vaguely, the enormous effrontery of Brown's undertaking. Various peaceful citizens had been killed as well as several of Brown's followers. He himself, after getting possession of the different government buildings and picking up from the surrounding country a number of slaves and also a number of slaveholders as hostages, among whom was a member of the family of Washington, was forced to take refuge, with the remains of his band and his prisoners, in the engine-house, and continued there till Tuesday morning. But in the dull gray October dawn a detachment of United States Marines, under Colonel Robert E. Lee, broke in the doors, liberated the prisoners, and killed or captured all of the defenders. Brown was cut down fighting and received several wounds, which were at first thought to be dangerous, but which afterwards proved to be comparatively unimportant.

Virginia and the whole South were naturally infuriated. Brown was speedily tried on various charges and sentenced to be hanged. His Northern friends complained of indecent haste in the proceedings, but later historians agree that on the whole the affair was conducted with as much consideration as could have been expected. Brown bore himself through it all with the admirable dignity that he had shown from the first moment of his capture. Indeed the testimony of his captors

<sup>7</sup> Villard, Oswald Garrison, *John Brown*, p. 424.

<sup>8</sup> To Higginson, May 14, 1858, Boston Public Library MS.

and interrogators to his composure and clear-headedness is as impressive as that of his prisoners to his courage and thoughtful humanity.

During the long weeks of his imprisonment the condemned traitor showed an unfailing self-possession. He discouraged all attempts at escape and urged upon his friends that as a martyr to the cause he would serve it more substantially than by any further living effort. He corresponded widely, and his numerous letters, with their poignant directness and incontrovertible sincerity, afford the best evidence of the great qualities of his character.

On the second of December, 1859, John Brown was hanged at Charlestown, Virginia. Great military preparations were made to ensure a peaceful execution of the sentence and it was carried out with every detail of decorum and decency, except that a painful delay at the last moment prolonged the prisoner's suspense. Brown's bearing was perfect, his courage and calmness without flaw. There were no heroics, no rhetoric. He took an affectionate leave of his companions in arms and gave them each a quarter of a dollar, saying that he should have no further use for money.<sup>9</sup> Of an equally touching simplicity were his words, as he was driven to the gallows: "This *is* a beautiful country. I never had the pleasure of seeing it before,"<sup>10</sup> and the phrase seems somehow to give a startling insight into the vivid and intense perception of a man who is opening his eyes upon the other world. A few hours later the eyes were closed to this, and John Brown had become a strange, great legendary figure in the complicated progress of humanity.

### III

So died a typical incarnation of ideal, or fanatical, enthusiasm, a man absolutely convinced of the truth and justice of his own ideas of right and wrong, in certain points at any rate, and determined to impose them upon the world, by persuasion if possible, if not, by bloodshed, agony, and slaughter. He was a theorist, a reasoner, all the more rigorous in his theories because their scope was limited and their range narrow. You can see the rigor in the face, especially before it was bearded, in the set mouth, the cavernous eyes, the sturdy chin, the drawn brows and square forehead. There was a tremendous, indomitable stubbornness in the man. "Let the grand reason, that one course is right and another wrong, be kept continually before your own mind."<sup>11</sup> He kept it always before his and walked straight on, no matter whom his footsteps shattered.

<sup>9</sup> James Redpath, *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown*, p. 395.

<sup>10</sup> Villard, p. 555.

<sup>11</sup> Sanborn, F. B., *Life and Letters of John Brown*, p. 140.

To minds of a different type, reflective, curious, analytical, there is endless interest in studying such a temperament, in weighing the good and evil of its working in the world, good and evil to itself, good and evil to the vast body of its fellow beings. Let us trace out some of the ramifications of this, as illustrated in the case of Brown.

First as to the evil, and the evil to the world at large. Such natures are intolerant; from their point of view they have the right to be so. They know what should be done and what should not. Paltry excuses, quibbling reserves, charitable allowances, what are they but devices of the Evil One, cunningly assorted to obscure the real issue between heaven and hell? "I believe in the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence," said Brown. "I think they both mean the same thing; and it is better that a whole generation should pass off the face of the earth—men, women, and children—by a violent death, than that one jot of either should fail *in this country*. I mean exactly *so*, sir."<sup>12</sup> He meant so, he acted so, he lived so.

Such intolerance kills the quiet ease and joy of life. It kills compromise and mutual understanding, and breeds suspicion and mistrust. It breeds wrath and violence, sets father against son and brother against brother, triumphantly justifies such hideous crimes as the brutal murders on the Pottawatomie. And, alas, so often, it does all this from misapprehension, from reasoning with fierce, narrow, unenlightened logic, and reasoning wrong.

The injury of this fanatical temperament to the individual possessor of it is even more obvious than the injury to the world at large. Take intelligence. It cuts him off from curious knowledge, from wide interest in the movement of life and its varied currents and subtle developments. It makes him feel that all that does not renovate society from his point of view is frivolous and contemptible. Brown read, oh, yes, he read the Bible, always the Bible, and he read Plutarch, and he read books on military science. What if he had read Plato or Montaigne?

And beauty? What room, what leisure is there for beauty, a frivolous distraction, an idle, subtle siren which leads the soul astray from the one clear, arduous path it must forever follow? Brown loved music, loved hymns, they fed his strange melancholy, his strange exaltation. Yet probably he would have said of music, with Cowper: "If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, . . . it degenerates into a sensual delight and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same."<sup>13</sup> And Brown loved nature, but we have seen

<sup>12</sup> Sanborn, p. 140.

<sup>13</sup> To the Rev. John Newton, September 9, 1781.

that he walked through it as a man in a dream, and opened his eyes to it only when they were about to close forever.

It was the same with all the comforts of life, ease, fine clothes, delicate food, luxury, grace, elegance, and charm. The grosser man in us, the simple, natural man, unhaunted by far thoughts and tormenting scruples, enjoys these things, savors them, revels in them. But how can any one enjoy them whose mind is forever clouded with the misery of the world? How can a life be happy passed in the midst of those who suffer? To be sure, many lives are; but not this man's. He would cut off human wants, cut off superfluous desires, cut off bare needs. Those poor negroes were toiling under the lash, and why should he achieve felicity? He wore old, plain clothes and ate the simplest sustenance compatible with life. The painter Hunt saw him once at a social gathering refuse oysters "because 'he was not hungry.' I said to a friend—and Brown was not celebrated then, not having been hanged!—" "There's something remarkable about that man. Did you ever know a man to refuse oysters at a party because he was not hungry?" He did not take champagne, because he was 'not thirsty.' Held the glass as you would hold a doll for a baby. Was not going to gorge himself—a man with such a destiny and such a work before him."<sup>14</sup> When Douglass visited him in 1847, he was struck with the utter poverty of everything. "Plain as was the outside of this man's house, the inside was plainer. . . . There was an air of plainness about it which almost suggested destitution."<sup>15</sup> The meal was "such as a man might relish after following the plough all day."<sup>16</sup> "Innocent of paint, veneering, varnish, or table-cloth, the table announced itself unmistakably of pine and of the plainest workmanship."<sup>17</sup> And while the poverty may have resulted in part from lack of business ability, it came far more from absorption in higher things. "For twenty years," said Brown, in 1858, "I have never made any business arrangement which would prevent me at any time answering the call of the Lord. I have kept my affairs in such condition that in two weeks I could wind them up and be ready to obey that call; permitting nothing to stand in the way of duty—neither wife, children, nor worldly goods."<sup>18</sup>

It is equally evident that these lofty spiritual pursuits do not fit well with the lighter side of social life, with the more kindly human relations, the gay exchange of cordial, empty, daily jest and laughter. Brown had a grim, Old Testamentary humor of his own, that relaxed

<sup>14</sup> William M. Hunt's *Talks on Art*, Series II, p. 66.

<sup>15</sup> *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, p. 338.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Sanborn, p. 117.

the iron muscles of those mouth-corners just a trifle. But did he ever laugh with abandon? He mingled with men for his own purposes, though even with those closest to him he had a strange and desperate secrecy. For ordinary social converse he had no taste and no aptitude. "I have one unconquerable weakness," he said, with a smile, in those last unsmiling days: "I have always been more afraid of being taken into an evening party of ladies and gentlemen, than of meeting a company of men with guns."<sup>19</sup> Even the faculty of consolation, that most exquisite, tender link of friendship, was denied to him, or at least not given in large measure: "I never seemed to possess a faculty to console and comfort my friends in their grief; I am inclined, like the poor comforters of Job, to sit down in silence, lest in my miserable way I should only add to their grief."<sup>20</sup>

But the crowning interest of the effect of Brown's great aim in life upon his human relations appears in his dealings with his family. He was devotedly attached to both his wives and to his numerous sons and daughters. He was thoughtful of their worldly welfare, as he saw it, to the very end. He was more than thoughtful, he was tender. He was tender to the animals with whom he dealt so much. He was tender, divinely tender with human beings. When those he loved were ill he would give up food, give up sleep, give up immediately necessary labor to tend them and watch over them with delicate, considerate care. Yet he punished with pitiless severity. When one of his sons had earned a heavy whipping, he inflicted half of it and then made the boy lash the father's own bare back till the blood came.<sup>21</sup> "He compelled his wife to ride to church with him on a pillion on a young and unbroken horse he wished to tame, with the result that she was twice thrown."<sup>22</sup>

Also, he must rule, dominate, control everything that came near him. He dominated animals. "He said that he could always, without moving, make a dog or cat leave the room if he wished, by his eye."<sup>23</sup> Was he not one day to be ruler over thousands? If so, then surely he must dominate at home. "He was intolerant in little things and in little ways. . . . I had it from (his son) Owen, in a quiet way and from other sources in quite a loud way that in his family his methods were of the most arbitrary kind," says a not too friendly witness.<sup>24</sup> Douglass, a most friendly one, observes that "he fulfilled Saint Paul's idea of the

<sup>19</sup> Mrs. Marcus Spring, in Richard D. Webb, *The Life and Letters of Captain John Brown*, p. 297.

<sup>20</sup> Sanborn, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> Sanborn, p. 92.

<sup>22</sup> Villard, p. 36.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Edward Emerson, in *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. IX, p. 83.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, p. 131.

head of the family. His wife believed in him, and his children observed him with reverence."<sup>25</sup>

And when a great cause demanded it, both wife and children must be sacrificed without a moment's hesitation. He said it often, and, when necessary, he did it. The little sacrifices were demanded constantly and given freely. The supreme sacrifice was always held in readiness and accorded at the supreme moment. A son was killed in Kansas, two sons were killed at Harper's Ferry. Still he fought on, if not unmoved or without a tear, absolutely unaltered in his resolution to give what was far dearer than his own life to achieving the one great end of his and their existence on this earth. The strain of living so much apart from all he loved was terrible. It wrung his heart to think of their privation and sickness and sorrow. But even this grief was smothered in the thought of all that greater grief: "The anxiety I feel to see my *wife* and children once more I am unable to describe. . . . The *cries* of my poor *sorrow-stricken despairing children*, whose *'tears on their cheeks'* are *ever* in my eye and whose *sighs* are *ever* in my ears, may, however, prevent my enjoying the happiness I so much desire."<sup>26</sup>

Truly, the strain of this man's life in the grip of his overpowering obsession illuminates Heine's passionate saying: "We do not have ideas. The Idea has us and enslaves us and scourges us and drives us into the arena to fight for it like gladiators, who combat, whether they will or no."<sup>27</sup>

## IV

And what good comes from this tyrannous mastery of an idea, to balance and compensate all the wide burden of privation and misery? Let us consider such good first as it affects the individual, then as it affects the world at large. To clarify the consideration we must dig a little more deeply into the profound tangle of motives that lies at the base of moral and spiritual, as of all other, effort.

In such a case as Brown's the persistent, all-excluding nature of the obsession, its constant intrusion in season and out of season, its cruel dominance over all other motives and all other passions, undeniably suggests insanity. This solution has often been urged for Brown. It receives support from the man's singular and unfortunate inheritance. Insanity was rampant in his mother's family and there were a dozen instances in relatives more or less close to him. An effort was made to plead this in court. Brown himself rejected it scornfully. At the same

<sup>25</sup> *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, p. 338.

<sup>26</sup> Villard, p. 320.

<sup>27</sup> *Vorrede zum ersten Bande des Campe'schen Ausgabe des Salons*.



time I think his frequent recurrence to it indicates that its shadow haunted him with some discomfort. "I may be very insane," he wrote; "and I am so, if insane at all. But if that be so, insanity is like a very pleasant dream to me."<sup>28</sup> And again, "If I am insane, of course I should think I know more than all the rest of the world. But I do not think so."<sup>29</sup> Yet this is precisely what he did think, what every enthusiast and fanatic of his type thinks. In that overmastering, overwhelming assurance of knowing more than all the rest of the world, from whatever source, lies all their power—and all their weakness. In the greatest examples of the type the assurance proves itself well founded. The whole wide world comes in time to think as they did and so to justify their sacrifice and martyrdom. And it is here that more doubt arises in regard to Brown. Strong and vigorous as his intelligence was, it ran so much to the fantastic, and the conception, or misconception, of his final effort was so incoherently disastrous, that it is impossible to credit him with clear, commanding intellectual power. At the same time, it is equally impossible to describe him as in the stricter sense insane. Men who reason as consistently and will as insistently and act as persistently as he did, cannot be set apart as of diseased mind.

Yet to subordinate one's whole existence so completely to an all-engrossing purpose is beyond doubt abnormal. It absorbs life, drinks up the soul, sweeps the man out of the common course of daily interests and cares. And precisely in this absorption, in this excitement, lifting you above all earth, lies one of its charms. Such a nature as Brown's is born to struggle and fight, with something, with anything. He thought he loved peace. So he did, in theory. But the peace he loved was the peace you have to fight for. He was eager, restless. To be quiet was death, and to be comfortable, and even to be happy, was too like being quiet. "*I expect nothing* but to 'endure *hardness*,'" he said.<sup>30</sup> He wanted nothing but to endure hardness. When he was enduring and resisting, he knew he was alive. One of the most instructive sentences he ever wrote was, "I felt for a number of years, *in earlier life*, a steady, strong desire to *die*; but since I saw any prospect of becoming a 'reaper' in the *great* harvest, I have not only felt quite willing to *live*, but have enjoyed life much."<sup>31</sup> He probably enjoyed it most of all in prison, when only a few days of it were left him.

And besides the exhilaration of living for an ideal, there is the

<sup>28</sup> Sanborn, p. 609.

<sup>29</sup> Villard, p. 507.

<sup>30</sup> Villard, p. 323.

<sup>31</sup> Villard, p. 323.

element of personal ambition. It is quite unnecessary to assume with Mr. Wilson that Brown was actuated entirely by vulgar greed and narrow personal vanity. Who shall say that the greatest of teachers and prophets is wholly exempt from the delight of feeling, if not saying, I did this thing? The man is worth little who has not the root of such ambition in him. Assuredly Brown had it. Did he not write of himself in youth, "He very early in life became ambitious to excel in doing anything he undertook to perform"?<sup>32</sup> Did he not write in age, when treading on the heels of performance, "I have only had *this one* opportunity, in a life of nearly sixty years; and could I be continued ten times as long again, I might not again have another equal opportunity. God has honored but comparatively a *very small* part of mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards"?<sup>33</sup>

Further, there is the delight of dominance, of controlling things and leading men, of feeling that your sole, petty, finite will is making at least a portion of the universe bow and bend before it. To some spirits the thought of this is hateful and the effort for it repulsive. To others it is the supreme joy of life. And such preëminently was Brown. He even carried the instinct so far as to find it difficult to obey when obedience is perhaps the deepest secret of final mastery. He could not work well with others. He must rule or be nothing. Both friends and enemies testify to this. "Very superstitious, very selfish and very intolerant, with great self esteem. . . . He could not brook a rival," says one witness cited by Mr. Wilson.<sup>34</sup> "He doted on being the head of the heap, and he was," says Brown's brother-in-law.<sup>35</sup> And his son's comment is equally decided: "The trouble is, you want your boys to be brave as tigers, and still afraid of you."<sup>36</sup> While the father, meditating soberly in his Virginia prison, recognized the same weakness as clearly as any one. He writes of one of his sons, he "always has underrated himself; is bashful and retiring in his habits; is not (like his father) too much inclined to assume and dictate."<sup>37</sup>

Thus, such a temper would like to control and dominate the world, but always for the world's good. In Brown at least there was not a trace of conscious desire to rule for evil or for the gratification of any personal motive of mischief or cruelty. In spite of all he had endured and all the slights and injuries of men, he repeats over and over that no thought of revenge enters into any of his efforts. If the wicked must

<sup>32</sup> Villard, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> Sanborn, p. 444.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, p. 130.

<sup>35</sup> Sanborn, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> Villard, p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> Sanborn, p. 600.

suffer through his action, it is because they are wicked, not because they have tormented him.

For back of all the personal elements, back even of the abstract desire to do good, there was always God, and in the study of such temperaments as Brown's the obscure, vast mystery of God must always be given the largest place. It is here, I think, chiefly that Mr. Wilson's shrewd analysis is at fault. In all the puzzles, in all the tangles, in all the inconsistencies of this strange man's life, especially in elucidating his plan, or lack of plan, before the attack on Harper's Ferry, we must look to God as the solution. He was a child of destiny, like Napoleon, but with him the destiny was the obvious, constant direction of God. "The Lord had directed him in visions what to do."<sup>38</sup> "He scouted the idea of rest while he held 'a commission direct from God Almighty to act against slavery.'"<sup>39</sup> "God had created him to be the deliverer to slaves the same as Moses had delivered the children of Israel."<sup>40</sup> It is true that Brown several times spoke of himself as naturally sceptical.<sup>41</sup> He was shrewd, hard-headed, far from disposed to accept all the fantastic quips and quirks of credulous superstition. But his intense insistence on what he did believe was all the firmer, and he did believe that God had predestined him from eternity to root out the curse from these United States, he did believe that God bade him do fierce and bloody things that that curse might be rooted out forever. In 1856 Mrs. Coleman asked him, "Then, Captain, you think that God uses you as an instrument in his hands to kill men?" And he answered, "I think he has used me as an instrument to kill men; and if I live, I think he will use me as an instrument to kill a good many more."<sup>42</sup>

And if this sense of immediate direction from God, of being in the hands of God as a mighty agent for his purposes, for everlasting good, even sometimes through apparent evil, is the greatest motive for human accomplishment, is it not also the greatest source of human rapture? The joy it brings is the most acute and exalted of all joys and the peace it gives is the deepest and the most enduring of all peace. So at least Brown found it, in his prison days, with death awaiting him, having failed in his great undertaking according to the judgment of men, but with the growing consciousness that apparent failure covered God's intention in a mightier triumph which could be made perfect only by his departure from this troubled world. He was "fully persuaded that I

<sup>38</sup> Villard, p. 200.

<sup>39</sup> James Redpath, *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown*, p. 226.

<sup>40</sup> Villard, p. 310.

<sup>41</sup> Villard, p. 552.

<sup>42</sup> Sanborn, p. 259.

am worth inconceivably more to *hang* than for any other purpose."<sup>43</sup> And in that persuasion his spirit found more contentment than it had known in all his restless sixty years. "Tell your father that I am quite cheerful; that I do not feel myself in the least degraded by my imprisonment, my chains, or the near prospect of the gallows. Men cannot imprison, or chain, or hang the soul."<sup>44</sup> And when an effort was made to comfort him, he said, "I sleep peacefully as an infant, or if I am wakeful, glorious thoughts come to me, entertaining my mind."<sup>45</sup>

It is one of the characteristics of this spiritual rapture that it is impelled to extend itself to others. None who feels the ecstasy of God upon him can refrain from communicating it, from striving passionately to make the world over and urging others to make it over also. And none strove thus with more ardor than John Brown. Something magnetic in his obsession touched men of the most diverse temperaments and powers, roused them to think and feel and work as he did.

Take his immediate followers, take that group of boys, or little more than boys, who gathered about him with unquestioning loyalty in the last desperate venture. They were not especially religious. Even Brown's own sons did not adopt his orthodox interpretation of the Bible. But every man of the company had imbibed the spirit of sacrifice, every man was ready to give his life for the cause their leader had preached to them, every man believed that what he said should be done must be done. "They perfectly worshiped the ground the old fellow trod on," said a Southern observer who had no sympathy with them except in the admiration of splendid courage.<sup>46</sup>

Nor was it only over those who came under his immediate command that Brown exercised the magnetism of inspiration and stimulus. After his capture and during his imprisonment he was surrounded by bitter enemies. But they grew to respect him and some apparently to have a personal regard for him. Even when they condemned his cause, they esteemed his spirit of sacrifice and his superb singleness of purpose. In the years before the crisis came he met some of the keenest and most intelligent men in the United States and they saw and felt in him a man of power, a man of will, a man of ideals above and beyond the common average and level of trivial earthliness. "No matter how inconsistent, impossible, and desperate a thing might appear to others, if John Brown said he would do it, he was sure to be believed. His words were never taken for empty bravado," wrote Frederick Douglass.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Villard, p. 496.

<sup>44</sup> Sanborn, p. 593.

<sup>45</sup> James Redpath, *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown*, p. 377.

<sup>46</sup> Villard, p. 510.

<sup>47</sup> Letter of Douglass, in F. B. Sanborn, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, vol. I, p. 249.

That enthusiasts like Gerritt Smith should be carried away was perhaps natural. But Emerson was not an enthusiast, Thoreau was not, Theodore Parker was not. All these men spoke of Brown as one gifted for some divine purpose beyond mortality. All of them thanked the humble farmer and shepherd for that thrill of exaltation which is one of the greatest forces that can touch the heart. No one will call John A. Andrew an enthusiast. He was a practical man of the world, versed in the hard conduct of everyday affairs. Yet Andrew said: "Whatever might be thought of John Brown's acts, John Brown himself was right."<sup>48</sup>

And the influence of such a man and such a life and such a death flowed out and on beyond the men who obeyed him, beyond the men who met him, to those who never knew him and had hardly even heard of him, to the whole country, to the wide world. The song that carries his name inspired millions throughout the great Civil War, it has inspired millions since, and John Brown's soul and sacrifice were back of the song. That is what Brown meant when he said, "I am worth inconceivably more to hang than for any other purpose."<sup>49</sup> That is what men of his type achieve by their fierce struggle and their bitter self-denial and their ardent sacrifice. They make others, long years after, others who barely know their names and nothing of their history, achieve also some little or mighty sacrifice, accomplish some vast and far-reaching self-denial, that so the world, through all its doubts and complications and perplexities, may be lifted just a little towards ideal felicity. Whatever their limitations, their errors, whatever taint of earthly damage has infected their souls, it may justly be said that "these men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live."<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Sanborn, p. 446.

<sup>49</sup> Villard, p. 496.

<sup>50</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Journal*, Vol. XII, p. 438.

# Miss Ormerod<sup>1</sup>

VIRGINIA WOOLF (1882-1941)

If heredity and environment alone could make a writer, Virginia Stephen Woolf would certainly have arrived without the years of patient practice in her art. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, was the scholar who edited the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and the blood of the Darwins, the Stracheys, and the Symondses ran through her veins. As a girl she saw Stevenson, Ruskin, Lowell, Meredith, and Hardy at her father's house. Later when she settled, with her writer husband, Leonard Woolf, in Bloomsbury within the shadow of the British Museum, her close neighbors included E. M. Forster, the novelist, J. M. Keynes, economist and biographer, Clive Bell, the critic, Roger Fry, the painter, and, most famous of all, Lytton Strachey, the father of modern biography. This amazing "Bloomsbury group" was no chance clustering of neighbors. It was an integrated society bound by common intellectual and artistic aims, seeking, as Vincent Sheean once wrote, "an ivory tower for contemplation, not for escape." In the spring of 1941 the German bombers disturbed that contemplation. Bombed out of two different residences in Bloomsbury, the Woolfs took refuge at their summer home near Lewes. And on March 28, unable any longer to concentrate on her work, Virginia Woolf drowned herself in the River Ouse.

Although thoroughly steeped in the cultural tradition of the past and fully aware of the continuity of that tradition, Mrs. Woolf fought ardently against a number of conventions. She argued woman's right to independence and the public duty to abolish book reviewers. In fiction she was a leading experimenter in an age of experiment, opening new and strange vistas of narrative technique with each succeeding novel. In *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *The Waves* (1931), and *The Years* (1937), she revolted against the conventional presentation of characters' lives in finished blocks of linear narrative, the method of Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale*. Replacing the bare prose of most narrative with a honey-laden prose-poetry, shunning dialogue for the flotsam and jetsam of the interior monologue, and purposely ignoring the exigencies of plot and the conventions of time and place—she set out to prove that "life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged" but "a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end."

The *Atlantic Monthly* for April 1939 published an article by Vir-

<sup>1</sup> Founded upon *The Life of Eleanor Ormerod*, by Robert Wallace Murray. 1904.

ginia Woolf entitled "The Art of Biography." In it she maintained that biography is not an art, like fiction, but a craft, and that while the novelist is limited only by his own creative instinct, the biographer should remain within the bounds of verifiable fact. The writer may choose either the free world of his creation or the limited world of fact; he must not choose both at once, for invented facts and verifiable facts destroy each other. Hence, she concluded, Strachey's *Queen Victoria*, in which he stuck to his craft, was a success, whereas *Elizabeth and Essex*, in which he tried to treat biography as an art, was a failure.

Mrs. Woolf's own contributions to the "craft" are not so orthodox as this doctrine might lead one to assume. Of her three full-length "biographies" only one, the recent *Roger Fry* (1940), is relatively conventional. The limits of the *genre* must be extended widely to include the other two, though Mrs. Woolf described them as "biographies." *Orlando* (1929), although ostensibly based on the life of the novelist V. Sackville-West, is actually an amazing fantasy in which the central character begins as a hero and evolves after three centuries of life into a heroine. *Flush* (1933) is a playful biography of that eminent Victorian cocker spaniel who graced the boudoir of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Equally original are Mrs. Woolf's short biographical sketches, some of which she published in those two masterly little miscellanies called *The Common Reader* (first series, 1925, second, 1932). "Miss Ormerod" is from the first of these. Obscure as she is to the layman, Eleanor Ormerod earned her sober column in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. There one can find that she was born in 1828 and was consulting entomologist to the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and that "that unlucky accident at Waterloo" was a railway station mishap in 1882 which left her permanently lame. But Mrs. Woolf does not pretend to illuminate every gig lamp along the way. Instead, she darts swiftly through the years, lighting up the character now here and now there with dazzling flashes—using, in short, the impressionistic technique which is common to her novels.

When Bernard, the poet, is trying to unravel the skein of six interwoven lives in the closing pages of *The Waves*, he thinks disdainfully of the plodding "biographic style"—"phrases laid like Roman roads across the tumult of our lives," making us "walk in step like civilized people with the slow and measured tread of policemen though one may be humming any nonsense under one's breath at the same time." And that is certainly the way Virginia Woolf herself felt about it.

THE TREES STOOD MASSIVELY in all their summer foliage spotted and grouped upon a meadow which sloped gently down from the big white house. There were unmistakable signs of the year 1835 both in the trees and in the sky, for modern trees are not nearly so voluminous as these

From *The Common Reader*, by Virginia Woolf. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., publishers.

ones, and the sky of those days had a kind of pale diffusion in its texture which was different from the more concentrated tone of the skies we know.

Mr. George Ormerod stepped from the drawing-room window of Sedbury House, Gloucestershire, wearing a tall furry hat and white trousers strapped under his instep; he was closely, though deferentially, followed by a lady wearing a yellow-spotted dress over a crinoline, and behind her, singly and arm in arm, came nine children in nankeen jackets and long white drawers. They were going to see the water let out of a pond.

The youngest child, Eleanor, a little girl with a pale face, rather elongated features, and black hair, was left by herself in the drawing-room, a large sallow apartment with pillars, two chandeliers, for some reason enclosed in holland bags, and several octagonal tables, some of inlaid wood and others of greenish malachite. At one of these little Eleanor Ormerod was seated in a high chair.

"Now, Eleanor," said her mother, as the party assembled for the expedition to the pond, "here are some pretty beetles. Don't touch the glass. Don't get down from your chair, and when we come back little George will tell you all about it."

So saying, Mrs. Ormerod placed a tumbler of water containing about half a dozen great water grubs in the middle of the malachite table, at a safe distance from the child, and followed her husband down the slope of old-fashioned turf towards a cluster of extremely old-fashioned sheep; opening, directly she stepped on to the terrace, a tiny parasol of bottle green silk with a bottle green fringe, though the sky was like nothing so much as a flock bed covered with a counterpane of white dimity.

The plump pale grubs gyrated slowly round and round in the tumbler. So simple an entertainment must surely soon have ceased to satisfy. Surely Eleanor would shake the tumbler, upset the grubs, and scramble down from her chair. Why, even a grown person can hardly watch those grubs crawling down the glass wall, then floating to the surface, without a sense of boredom not untinged with disgust. But the child sat perfectly still. Was it her custom, then, to be entertained by the gyrations of grubs? Her eyes were reflective, even critical. But they shone with increasing excitement. She beat one hand upon the edge of the table. What was the reason? One of the grubs had ceased to float: he lay at the bottom; the rest, descending, proceeded to tear him to pieces.

"And how has little Eleanor enjoyed herself?" asked Mr. Ormerod,



in rather a deep voice, stepping into the room and with a slight air of heat and of fatigue upon his face.

"Papa," said Eleanor, almost interrupting her father in her eagerness to impart her observation, "I saw one of the grubs fall down and the rest came and ate him!"

"Nonsense, Eleanor," said Mr. Ormerod. "You are not telling the truth." He looked severely at the tumbler in which the beetles were still gyrating as before.

"Papa, it was true!"

"Eleanor, little girls are not allowed to contradict their fathers," said Mrs. Ormerod, coming in through the window, and closing her green parasol with a snap.

"Let this be a lesson," Mr. Ormerod began, signing to the other children to approach, when the door opened, and the servant announced, "Captain Fenton."

Captain Fenton "was at times thought to be tedious in his recurrence to the charge of the Scots Greys in which he had served at the battle of Waterloo."

But what is this crowd gathered round the door of the George Hotel in Chepstow? A faint cheer rises from the bottom of the hill. Up comes the mail coach, horses steaming, panels mud-splashed. "Make way! Make way!" cries the ostler and the vehicle dashes into the courtyard, pulls up sharp before the door. Down jumps the coachman, the horses are led off, and a fine team of spanking greys is harnessed with incredible speed in their stead. Upon all this—coachman, horses, coach, and passengers—the crowd looked with gaping admiration every Wednesday all through the year. But today, the twelfth of March, 1852, as the coachman settled his rug, and stretched his hands for the reins, he observed that instead of being fixed upon him, the eyes of the people of Chepstow darted this way and that. Heads were jerked. Arms flung out. Here a hat swooped in a semi-circle. Off drove the coach almost unnoticed. As it turned the corner all the outside passengers craned their necks, and one gentleman rose to his feet and shouted, "There! there! there!" before he was bowled into eternity. It was an insect—a red-winged insect. Out the people of Chepstow poured into the high road; down the hill they ran; always the insect flew in front of them; at length by Chepstow Bridge a young man, throwing his bandanna over the blade of an oar, captured it alive and presented it to a highly respectable elderly gentleman who now came puffing upon the scene—Samuel Budge, doctor, of Chepstow. By Samuel Budge it was presented to Miss Ormerod; by her sent to a professor at Oxford. And he, declar-

ing it "a fine specimen of the rose under-winged locust," added the gratifying information that it "was the first of the kind to be captured so far west."

And so, at the age of twenty-four Miss Eleanor Ormerod was thought the proper person to receive the gift of a locust.

When Eleanor Ormerod appeared at archery meetings and croquet tournaments young men pulled their whiskers and young ladies looked grave. It was so difficult to make friends with a girl who could talk of nothing but black beetles and earwigs—"Yes, that's what she likes, isn't it queer?—Why, the other day Ellen, Mama's maid, heard from Jane, who's under-kitchenmaid at Sedbury House, that Eleanor tried to boil a beetle in the kitchen saucepan and he wouldn't die, and swam round and round, and she got into a terrible state and sent the groom all the way to Gloucester to fetch chloroform—all for an insect, my dear!—and she gives the cottagers shillings to collect beetles for her—and she spends hours in her bedroom cutting them up—and she climbs trees like a boy to find wasps' nests—oh, you can't think what they don't say about her in the village—for she does look so odd, dressed anyhow, with that great big nose and those bright little eyes, so like a caterpillar herself, I always think—but of course she's wonderfully clever and very good, too, both of them. Georgiana has a lending library for the cottagers, and Eleanor never misses a service—but there she is—that short pale girl in the large bonnet. Do go and talk to her, for I'm sure I'm too stupid, but you'll find plenty to say—" But neither Fred nor Arthur, Henry nor William found anything to say—

"... probably the lecturer would have been equally well pleased had none of her own sex put in an appearance."

This comment upon a lecture delivered in the year 1889 throws some light, perhaps, upon archery meetings in the 'fifties.

It being nine o'clock on a February night some time about 1862, all the Ormerods were in the library; Mr. Ormerod making architectural designs at a table; Mrs. Ormerod lying on a sofa making pencil drawings upon grey paper; Eleanor making a model of a snake to serve as a paper weight; Georgiana making a copy of the font in Tidenham Church; some of the others examining books with beautiful illustrations; while at intervals someone rose, unlocked the wire book case, took down a volume for instruction or entertainment, and perused it beneath the chandelier.

Mr. Ormerod required complete silence for his studies. His word

was law, even to the dogs, who, in the absence of their master, instinctively obeyed the eldest male person in the room. Some whispered colloquy there might be between Mrs. Ormerod and her daughters—

"The draught under the pew was really worse than ever this morning, Mama—"

"And we could only unfasten the latch of the chancel because Eleanor happened to have her ruler with her—"

"—Hm-m-m. Dr. Armstrong—hm-m-m—"

"—Anyhow things aren't as bad with us as they are at Kinghampton. They say Mrs. Briscoe's Newfoundland dog follows her right up to the chancel rails when she takes the sacrament—"

"And the turkey is still sitting on its eggs in the pulpit."

"—The period of incubation for a turkey is between three and four weeks"—said Eleanor, thoughtfully looking up from her cast of the snake and forgetting, in the interest of her subject, to speak in a whisper.

"Am I to be allowed no peace in my own house?" Mr. Ormerod exclaimed angrily, rapping with his ruler on the table, upon which Mrs. Ormerod half shut one eye and squeezed a little blob of Chinese white on to her high light, and they remained silent until the servants came in, when everyone, with the exception of Mrs. Ormerod, fell on their knees. For she, poor lady, suffered from a chronic complaint and left the family forever a year or two later, when the green sofa was moved into the corner, and the drawings given to her nieces in memory of her. But Mr. Ormerod went on making architectural drawings at nine p.m. every night (save on Sundays when he read a sermon) until he too lay upon the green sofa, which had not been used since Mrs. Ormerod lay there, but still looked much the same. "We deeply felt the happiness of ministering to his welfare," Miss Ormerod wrote, "for he would not hear of our leaving him for even twenty-four hours and he objected to visits from my brothers excepting occasionally for a short time. They, not being used to the gentle ways necessary for an aged invalid, worried him . . . the Thursday following, the 9th October, 1873, he passed gently away at the mature age of eighty-seven years." Oh, graves in country churchyards—respectable burials—mature old gentlemen—D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., F.S.A.—lots of letters come after your names, but lots of women are buried with you!

There remained the Hessian Fly and the Bot—mysterious insects! Not, one would have thought, among God's most triumphant creations, and yet—if you see them under a microscope!—the Bot, obese, globular, obscene; the Hessian, booted, spurred, whiskered, cadaverous. Next slip under the glass an innocent grain; behold it pock-marked and

livid; or take this strip of hide, and note those pullulating lumps—well, what does the landscape look like then?

The only palatable object for the eye to rest on in acres of England is a lump of Paris Green. But English people won't use microscopes; you can't make them use Paris Green either—or if they do, they let it drip. Dr. Ritzema Bos is a great stand-by. For they won't take a woman's word. And indeed, though for the sake of the Ox Warble one must stretch a point, there are matters, questions of stock infestation, things one has to go into—things a lady doesn't even like to see, much less discuss, in print—"these, I say, I intend to leave entirely to the Veterinary surgeons. My brother—oh, he's dead now—a very good man—for whom I collected wasps' nests—lived at Brighton and wrote about wasps—he, I say, wouldn't let me learn anatomy, never liked me to do more than take sections of teeth."

Ah, but Eleanor, the Bot and the Hessian have more power over you than Mr. Edward Ormerod himself. Under the microscope you clearly perceive that these insects have organs, orifices, excrement; they do, most emphatically, copulate. Escorted on the one side by the Bot or Warble, on the other by the Hessian Fly, Miss Ormerod advanced stately, if slowly, into the open. Never did her features show more sublime than when lit up by the candour of her avowal. "This is excrement; these, though Ritzema Bos is positive to the contrary, are the generative organs of the male. I've proved it." Upon her head the hood of Edinburgh most fitly descended; pioneer of purity even more than of Paris Green.

"If you're sure I'm not in your way," said Miss Lipscomb, unstrapping her paint box and planting her tripod firmly in the path, "—I'll try to get a picture of these lovely hydrangeas against the sky—What flowers you have in Penzance!"

The market gardener crossed his hands on his hoe, slowly twined a piece of bass round his finger, looked at the sky, said something about the sun, also about the prevalence of lady artists, and then, with a nod of his head, observed sententiously that it was to a lady that he owed everything he had.

"Ah?" said Miss Lipscomb, flattered, but already much occupied with her composition.

"A lady with a queer-sounding name," said Mr. Pascoe, "but that's the lady I've called my little girl after—I don't think there's such another in Christendom."

Of course it was Miss Ormerod, equally of course Miss Lipscomb was the sister of Miss Ormerod's family doctor; and so she did no sketching

that morning, but left with a handsome bunch of grapes instead—for every flower had drooped, ruin had stared him in the face—he had written, not believing one bit what they told him—to the lady with the queer name, back there came a book, *In-ju-ri-ous In-sects*, with the page turned down, perhaps by her very hand, also a letter which he kept at home under the clock, but he knew every word by heart, since it was due to what she said there that he wasn't a ruined man—and the tears ran down his face and Miss Lipscomb, clearing a space on the lodging-house table, wrote the whole story to her brother.

"The prejudice against Paris Green certainly seems to be dying down," said Miss Ormerod when she read it.—"But now," she sighed rather heavily, being no longer young and much afflicted with the gout, "now it's the sparrows."

One might have thought that *they* would have left her alone—innocent dirt-grey birds, taking more than their share of the breakfast crumbs, otherwise inoffensive. But once you look through a microscope—once you see the Hessian and the Bot as they really are—there's no peace for an elderly lady pacing her terrace on a fine May morning. For example, why, when there are crumbs enough for all, do only the sparrows get them? Why not swallows or martins? Why—oh, here come the servants for prayers—

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. . . . For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen—"

"*The Times*, ma'am—"

"Thank you, Dixon. . . . The Queen's birthday! We must drink her Majesty's health in the old white port, Dixon. Home Rule—tut—tut—tut. All that madman Gladstone. My father would have thought the world was coming to an end, and I'm not at all sure that it isn't. I must talk to Dr. Lipscomb—"

Yet all the time in the tail of her eye she saw myriads of sparrows, and retiring to the study proclaimed in a pamphlet of which 36,000 copies were gratuitously distributed that the sparrow is a pest.

"When he eats an insect," she said to her sister Georgiana, "which isn't often, it's one of the few insects that one wants to keep—one of the very few," she added with a touch of acidity natural to one whose investigations have all tended to the discredit of the insect race.

"But there'll be some very unpleasant consequences to face," she concluded—"Very unpleasant indeed."

Happily the port was now brought in, the servants assembled; and Miss Ormerod, rising to her feet, gave the toast "Her Blessed Majesty." She was extremely loyal, and moreover she liked nothing better than

a glass of her father's old white port. She kept his pigtail, too, in a box.

Such being her disposition it went hard with her to analyse the sparrow's crop, for the sparrow, she felt, symbolises something of the homely virtue of English domestic life, and to proclaim it stuffed with deceit was disloyal to much that she, and her fathers before her, held dear. Sure enough the clergy—the Rev. J. E. Walker—denounced her for her brutality; “God Save the Sparrow!” exclaimed the Animal's Friend; and Miss Carrington, of the Humanitarian League, replied in a leaflet described by Miss Ormerod as “spirity, discourteous, and inaccurate.”

“Well,” said Miss Ormerod to her sister, “it did me no harm before to be threatened to be shot at, also hanged in effigy, and other little attentions.”

“Still it was very disagreeable, Eleanor—more disagreeable, I believe, to me than to you,” said Georgiana. Soon Georgiana died. She had however finished the beautiful series of insect diagrams at which she worked every morning in the dining-room and they were presented to Edinburgh University. But Eleanor was never the same woman after that.

Dear forest fly—flour moths—weevils—grouse and cheese flies—beetles—foreign correspondents—eel worms—ladybirds—wheat midges—resignation from the Royal Agricultural Society—gall mites—boot beetles—announcement of honorary degree to be conferred—feelings of appreciation and anxiety—paper on wasps—last annual report—warnings of serious illness—proposed pension—gradual loss of strength—finally Death.

That is life, so they say.

“It does no good to keep people waiting for an answer,” sighed Miss Ormerod, “though I don't feel as able as I did since that unlucky accident at Waterloo. And no one realises what the strain of the work is—often I'm the only lady in the room, and the gentlemen so learned, though I've always found them most helpful, most generous in every way. But I'm growing old, Miss Hartwell, that's what it is. That's what led me to be thinking of this difficult matter of flour infestation in the middle of the road so that I didn't see the horse until he had poked his nose into my ear. . . . Then there's this nonsense about a pension. What could possess Mr. Barron to think of such a thing? I should feel inexpressibly lowered if I accepted a pension. Why, I don't altogether like writing LL.D. after my name, though Georgie would have liked it. All I ask is to be let go on in my own quiet way. Now

where is Messrs. Langridges' sample? We must take that first. 'Gentlemen, I have examined your sample and find . . .'

"If anyone deserves a thorough rest it's you, Miss Ormerod," said Dr. Lipscomb, who had grown a little white over the ears. "I should say the farmers of England ought to set up a statue to you, bring offerings of corn and wine—make you a kind of Goddess, eh—what was her name?"

"Not a very shapely figure for a Goddess," said Miss Ormerod with a little laugh. "I should enjoy the wine though. You're not going to cut me off my one glass of port surely?"

"You must remember," said Dr. Lipscomb, shaking his head, "how much your life means to others."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Miss Ormerod, pondering a little. "To be sure, I've chosen my epitaph. 'She introduced Paris Green into England,' and there might be a word or two about the Hessian Fly—that, I do believe, was a good piece of work."

"No need to think about epitaphs yet," said Dr. Lipscomb.

"Our lives are in the hands of the Lord," said Miss Ormerod simply.

Dr. Lipscomb bent his head and looked out of the window. Miss Ormerod remained silent.

"English entomologists care little or nothing for objects of practical importance," she exclaimed suddenly. "Take this question of flour infestation—I can't say how many grey hairs that has grown me."

"Figuratively speaking, Miss Ormerod," said Dr. Lipscomb, for her hair was still raven black.

"Well, I do believe all good work is done in concert," Miss Ormerod continued. "It is often a great comfort to me to think that."

"It's beginning to rain," said Dr. Lipscomb. "How will your enemies like that, Miss Ormerod?"

"Hot or cold, wet or dry, insects always flourish!" cried Miss Ormerod energetically, sitting up in bed.

"Old Miss Ormerod is dead," said Mr. Drummond, opening *The Times* on Saturday, July 20th, 1901.

"Old Miss Ormerod?" asked Mrs. Drummond.

# Edison in His Laboratory

M. A. ROSANOFF (1874- )

Dr. Martin André Rosanoff was born in Nicolaëff, Russia. After early schooling at the Imperial Classical Gymnasium there he came to America in 1891. He received his Ph.B. from New York University in 1895 and followed that with a year of graduate study at the University of Berlin and two at the University of Paris. Upon returning to this country he continued his studies at New York University and acted for three years as Editor for exact sciences on the *New International Encyclopedia*. In 1903 and 1904 he was research assistant to Thomas A. Edison in his Orange laboratory. He has since had a distinguished career as a chemist, teaching at New York University, where he received his Sc.D. in 1908, Clark, Pittsburgh, and Duquesne. In his capacity as Dean of the Graduate School at Duquesne he devoted six years to building up a useful and respected school of specialized study and research. Since leaving Duquesne in 1940, he has been writing a book on higher mathematics for students of science.

Although Dr. Rosanoff has contributed to scholarly journals in his own field, he is not in the usual sense of the word a "writer." But it is misleading to think of biography only as the synthesis of written records exhumed in libraries by a professional "biographer" who has never seen his chosen subject. The great biographies in English are personal reminiscences. Boswell cross-examined Johnson in person and by mail for twenty years, Lockhart was Scott's son-in-law, and Froude visited the Carlyle house in Cheyne Row with faithful regularity. A personal acquaintance is not necessarily a great man's most dependable biographer. Gamaliel Bradford has shown how Herndon's picture of Lincoln's marriage is as turbulent as Rankin's is blissful—and both "knew Lincoln when." But the honest reminiscence, untainted by a desire to whitewash or to blacken, has an authentic flavor which the more remote biographer who starts from scratch in the library can never hope to duplicate. When Dr. Rosanoff's unaffected record of Edison in his laboratory was reprinted from *Harper's Magazine* in the *Revue Hebdomadaire* of Paris, the French editor wrote this about it:

Dr. M. A. Rosanoff is a sharp-eyed witness. . . . It is truly the living Edison whom he shows us, with his quirks, his flashes of temperament, his humors, and his failings. . . . And it is not one of the least merits of this exceptional document that it invites us, incidentally, to revise the stereotyped image which we commonly form of genius.



I MET EDISON almost accidentally. One Saturday noon, early in 1903, an acquaintance told me that he had some business to transact with the inventor and was starting out to Orange. Would I like to go along and meet Mr. Edison? I said it would indeed be interesting, but would not Mr. Edison dislike a stranger calling on him as an idle handshaker? My acquaintance reassured me that Edison was very approachable. So we went.

The laboratory gateman went to announce us and returned to say that Mr. Edison would see us at once. In a small reception room, Edison was sprawled in a leisurely attitude, with an air of not a thing in the world to do. He got through with my acquaintance's business in short order and then turned his penetrating eyes on me. Where had I studied? What had I done? What was I doing now? I told him of my chemical studies and research apprenticeships in this country and abroad. "Grand science, chemistry," he observed. "I like it best of all the sciences. Without chemistry modern industry and commerce just wouldn't exist. But it's still a mere baby of a science, an awful lot more unknown than known. . . ."

We had an interesting talk, and when the time came to take leave, our handshake was cordial. "Say," said Edison suddenly, "do you want a job?" I thanked him but said no. I was engaged editorially upon a forthcoming encyclopædia. He persisted, "Why waste time writing about what other people have done? Don't you want to do something yourself?" I repeated that I could not leave my work unfinished. "Well," he concluded, "any time you want a job, drop in to see me. I'll give you a job."

My first conversation with Edison was characteristic of the way he selected his research assistants. No blanks to fill out, no references, no efficiency tests, nothing but a penetrating mental inspection. And later, no wordy weekly reports, no staff meetings, no clicking army of typists; in brief, no efficiency show, nothing but research work.

That evening at dinner I did little but talk Edison to a breathless audience of relatives. And before the evening was over my audience had talked *me* into arranging to finish my encyclopædia work in the evenings and accepting Edison's offer of a research position in his laboratory. On Monday morning I called up the laboratory to ask for an appointment at Mr. Edison's convenience. "Hold the wire." And two minutes later, "Mr. Edison says to come right over."

"Mr. Edison," said I, "I do not know whether your offer, Saturday, was just by way of a friendly compliment to a stranger . . ." "Oh, no,"

he interrupted, "I meant it."—"In that case," said I, "I have come to accept it."—"All right," said he, "you can begin work this morning." I told him I had to make arrangements, I had to move to Orange; I could not possibly begin before Wednesday morning. "All right," said he with resignation, "put it off till Wednesday."

On Wednesday morning he gave me my problem. "It's an easy one," he said, "at least it'll be easy for you, with your chemical training. You may know how a phonograph record is made: we first make a 'master' record on a cylinder of wax; from this we make a negative metal mold by electroplating; and from the mold we obtain, by casting, a number of commercial wax cylinders for sale. Now, the wax of our 'master' cylinders is a little too hard." He handed me a chunk of the wax and pointed out its smoothness and its fine-grained fracture, but also its comparative hardness. "When an extra-loud sound occurs in a song—you know, when an Eyetalian has suddenly fallen in love or somep'n—the recorder needle gives a jump, and then a tiny bit of the wax is chipped out; you can hardly see it without a microscope, but you hear it plenty afterwards. Besides, on account of the wax being so hard, part of the sound energy is wasted in cutting the wax, so that the phonograph gives back a good bit less volume than was put into it. This wax was worked out for me by a fellow named Aylsworth, who used to be my chemist here, and it's a pretty good wax. But it's got to be softened a bit to be *real* good, and I'm sure, with all your college training—in Paris and everywhere else—you can do it in no time. Well, now, that's your first problem, you can go right to work on it." I asked, "Mr. Edison, where will I find the old laboratory records, to see what the composition of this wax is and what attempts have been made to improve it?" He said, "The records are all lost, and I have clean forgotten what's been done, so you'll have to start all over again."

While I shouldered the simple and easy chemical task of improving the wax, with the view to enhancing the volume of sound, Edison himself undertook to improve the recording and reproducing apparatus, with the same end in view. We thus went to work on two aspects of one and the same problem; and as he chose to do his work in the room assigned to me, we were in intimate and almost constant contact for about a year and a half. We talked on all sorts of subjects, we exchanged views, we argued; and the result of our conversations are these fragmentary reminiscences, which I hope may integrate into a true pen portrait of this colorful personality, the Napoleon of invention.

As soon as we were installed in our *ménage*, I approached him in a humble spirit: "Mr. Edison, please tell me what laboratory rules you want me to observe." And right then and there I got my first surprise.

He spat in the middle of the floor and yelled out, "Hell! there *ain't* no rules around here! We are tryin' to accomplish somep'n!" And he walked off, leaving me flabbergasted.

## II

Edison seldom worked with his own hands. He had a mechanical man who did all the manipulating, while the master did the experimenting in his head. The mechanical man was named Freddie Ott: rotund, healthy, honest, exceedingly deft with his fingers; a tireless worker who felt tired all the time because he was out of sympathy with Edison's enterprising restlessness. Edison soon re-introduced himself and Freddie to me by pointing to himself as "Don Quixote" and to Freddie as "Santcho Pantcho." Edison himself was generally referred to as The Old Man. He had nicknamed his experimenters "Muckers," he himself being the chief Mucker.

Among the Muckers there was a youngster who was forever mixing new solders for the container of the Edison storage battery, in an effort to find one that would not be attacked by the caustic potash of the battery. In response to the Old Man's intolerance of sentimental inflation, he inflated his talk with aggressive hells, damns, and all the other accepted symbols of unsentimental virility; and every morning he even made up for work by skillfully spreading a lot of grime upon his manly countenance. But in spite of his studied nonchalance and his ritual make-up, his solders continued to be chewed up by the potash.

Another of the Muckers, Doctor Roos, was wrestling with the problem of getting rid of solder altogether and finding a way of making for the battery a seamless one-piece iron container by electro-plating. Under the Old Man's merciless pressure, he worked day and night. But as a usable one-piece container refused to come, he too deemed it prudent to begrime himself every morning till he looked like a locomotive fireman—a part that accorded poorly with his suavity of manner and the cultured quality of his Swedish voice. Roos dodged the Old Man whenever he could. One day, incautiously, he stepped into my room, and there, talking to me, was Edison. It was too late to back out. The Old Man had caught sight of him and called out, "Come 'ere, Roos, tell me how you are getting along." Roos improvised an expression of intense joy and shouted back, "I've got it, Mr. Edison, I've got it at last! I yoost need another day or two to straighten out some small details, then I'll be ready to report to you and show you the box." Roos's joy was now reflected in the Old Man's own face and intensified there to an expression of triumph. "Didn't I tell you right along," he said shrilly, "that you'd git it? I've been telling you *all* the time that all you got to do is

stick to it and work like hell, and you'd git it in the end! *Sure* you can have another day or two." And Roos made a rapid but orderly retreat out of the room. I turned to the Old Man. "I certainly want to congratulate both you and Roos, Mr. Edison, on his success at last." The Old Man looked at me as if doubting his ears. "Did *you* believe what he said?"—I opened my eyes wide, and stammered, "Why, of course, Mr. Edison; why, what do you mean?"—The Old Man explained cheerfully, "He hasn't got a damn thing. But that's the way to talk!"

In other words: believe or make believe that you believe. Conquer, or at least *say* that you are conquering. Anything to keep up morale. Never say die.

Shortly after I had begun my long and tedious search for an improved wax I happened to complain to a group of the Muckers that I felt handicapped by the loss of the old laboratory notes, so that the history of my subject was hidden from me. One sophisticated member of the group undertook to explain. "Say," he said, "are you really innocent enough to believe that they are lost? Do you know where you'll land if you believe everything the Old Man says? You'll land with both feet in the green cheese of the moon, and there you'll stick. The Old Man is all for taking, and for giving nothing. You just catch that bird giving away his hard-earned trade secrets to an innocent phenomenon like you who happens to breeze in here." But another Mucker broke in with a truer interpretation. "Of course," said he, "the Old Man knows all about the old work, and is deliberately keeping you ignorant of it. But I think he is right. He and Aylsworth and others had got into a mental rut, and for years they have not been able to improve on Aylsworth's wax. He is feeding you plenty of compliments for encouragement, but in his heart he does not really think that you are any smarter than himself and Aylsworth, if as smart. If he should take you into his complete confidence, you would land in their old rut. He wants your fresh mind on the problem, and the only way to keep you unhampered by history and previous experience is to keep you entirely ignorant of it."

I speedily discovered that my problem was not such an easy one as the Old Man had represented. Any softener that I added to the old wax would either toughen or roughen it. If toughened, the wax would drag upon the recording needle so that the volume of sound would be reduced to a faint squawk. If roughened, as it usually was, it would give a noisy reproduction. The so-called wax, by the way, was chiefly a soap, with a small amount of real waxes and other ingredients added. Soaps, as you may know, are salts of the alkali metals, mostly of the metal sodium. When I began reaching the limit of my patience in trying to modify Aylsworth's "wax"—which was mainly a soap of sodium—I

bethought myself of taking the chemical bull by the horns and starting with a wax analogous to Aylsworth's, but having a soap of lithium instead of sodium as its dominant ingredient. This idea seemed to yield promising results at first; at least the waxes obtained were smooth—neither tough nor rough. But they were even harder than Aylsworth's wax and chipped even more easily. Eyetalian love songs, as the Old Man would say, became the bane of my existence. I began resenting more and more the Italian's way of making love by giving vent to amorous outbursts and yelling bloody murder. When their unrestrained arias continued to injure my thousand and one lithium waxes, and visiting Muckers began murmuring that the entire laboratory was in danger of going deaf except Edison himself, who was already deaf—then at last I reflected that either the Italians must be exterminated and all their music destroyed, or else I must give up my lithium wax experiments and label their total yield "Negative Results."

When I first began experimenting with lithium waxes I felt a little timid on account of the comparative costliness of lithium. But the Old Man reassured me. "Don't let *that* worry you. Try anything; try *radium* if you like. I don't care if it costs a million dollars a cylinder. Just show me anything that'll do the work; then I'll show you how to make it cheap enough for commercial use. Go right ahead with your lithium experiments. They're fine!"

When the lithium experiments were abandoned, after taking a heavy toll of my moral energy, I became a bit despondent. I turned the lithium morgue over to the Old Man. "Well," said I, "here is another bookful of Negative Results. I'm getting to feel rather faint with it."—"You're all wrong," said the Old Man with enthusiasm. "Negative results are just what I want. They are just as valuable to me as positive results. I can never find the thing that does the work best until I know everything that *don't* do it!" And more in the same vein. Partly kindness, maybe. On me it had the effect of a powerful stimulant, and doubtless that was Edison's intent. I went back to work. More waxes, and more, without end. . . .

### III

At one time the Old Man separated me from what had become "my steady" and put me on a temporary special job. Aylsworth's wax had not been patented, and its intricate composition was kept a trade secret. A rival (probably through a spying workman) obtained possession of the secret formula. The first I knew of this was when the Old Man asked me to investigate it and ascertain whether the rival's wax was really new. He said I might be called upon to testify in court and urged me to make my experimental study thorough.

I prepared a quantity of the wax in accordance with the patent specifications and began an exhaustive comparison of it with the Aylsworth wax. And the grand total of my conclusion, after several weeks of painstaking work, was that the thing was nothing else than Aylsworth's own wax, which had been used by Edison for years. When I reported my results to the Old Man with spirited indignation at the unsavory ways of his rival, he asked with a merry twinkle of amusement, "What are you so excited about? Everybody steals in commerce and industry. I've stolen a lot myself. But I knew *how* to steal. They don't know *how* to steal—that's all that's the matter with them." I said nothing; my breath was taken away.

## IV

And now, the patent job done, I returned to my waxes: more waxes, and more, without end. One day the Old Man sat down for a chat, and we exchanged confidences. "Do you believe in luck?" he asked me. I said, "Yes and no. My reasoning mind revolts against the superstition of luck; my savage soul clings to it."—"For my part," said the Old Man, "I do not believe in luck at all. And if there is such a thing as luck, then *I* must be the most unlucky fellow in the world. I've never once made a lucky strike in all my life. When I get after something that I need, I start finding everything in the world that I *don't* need—one damn thing after another. I find ninety-nine things that I don't need, and then comes number one hundred, and that—at the very last—turns out to be just what I had been looking for. It's got to be so that if I find something in a hurry, I git to doubting whether it's the real thing; so I go over it carefully and it generally turns out to be wrong. Wouldn't you call that hard luck? But I'm tellin' you, I don't believe in luck—good or bad. Most fellows try a few things and then quit. *I* never quit until I git what I'm after. That's the only difference between me, that's supposed to be lucky, and the fellows that think they are unlucky. Then again a lot of people think that I have done things because of some 'genius' that I've got. That too is not true. Any other bright-minded fellow can accomplish just as much if he will stick like hell and remember that nothing that's any good works by itself, just to please you; you got to *make* the damn thing work. You may have heard people repeat what I have said, 'Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration.' Yes, sir, it's mostly *hard work*." I said, "You will admit, Mr. Edison, that at least your patience is out of the ordinary?"—"Oh, yes," he replied, "I got lots of patience."

His statement is illuminating. In these homely words of his I find a partial answer to the question, What is that "genius" of Edison's, of

which the products are his many inventions used the world over? As his words imply, his great working capacity and his extraordinary patience were important parts of his genius. Edison shrank from the word genius because of its suggestion of a miraculous power of creating by mere inspiration something out of nothing. His famous modesty regarding the title "genius" was honest and unaffected. On the other hand, from my own point of view, I am still compelled to recognize him as a man of genius both on account of his extraordinary deeds and on account of the extraordinary combination of extraordinary traits which he possessed.

The Old Man was not always beaming smiles at me. In his opinion, a problem like mine called for "empirically" trying everything under the sun; and, therefore, theoretical notions of any kind, on account of their restraining and restricting influence, were to be feared above all. And as he became aware that, by natural inclination, I was forever struggling for some theoretical guide-light, he undertook a persistent campaign of re-educating my mind. By way of a morning greeting he got to screwing up his face into a disdainful grimace and calling out, "How is *theo*-retical chemistry this morning?" He began telling me stories of the triumph of his almost helter-skelter, trial-and-failure method over the prophecies of engineers based on scientific theory. One day he asked me to guess what material had made the first promising filament for the incandescent lamp. "You couldn't guess it in a hundred years," he said. "Limburger cheese! Now, can you show me a book of theoretical chemistry that explains why Limburger cheese must be good for the incandescent lamp?"

At times he would get away from the field of his inventions and start spinning theories on unrelated subjects. Then he often talked wildly. One day, he delivered himself of a discourse on the origin of warts. "A bunch of cells," he explained, "that belong somewhere or other in the body, git loose and sail away some place where they don't belong. Say, for example, a lot of cells git away from a toe and land 'way up in the nose. They don't know where they are or how in hell to act. So they go crazy and they start building toe, because that's all they know how to do—see? In this way a bit of toe grows up on the nose. We call it a wart, but it's nothing but a piece of toe in the wrong place. That's how warts come," he concluded. And his face assumed an expression of complete satisfaction.

"How singular," Mucker Rafn once remarked to me, "that with all of the Old Man's contacts with science, he has never made one scientific discovery!" The explanation is that Edison's contacts were, not with science proper, but only with its facts.

A favorite topic with him was his theory of sleep. To this he came back again and again. "Sleep," he asserted, "is an acquired habit. Cells don't sleep. Fish swim about in the water all night; *they* don't sleep. Even a horse don't sleep, he just stands still and rests. A man don't need any sleep. You try it sometime. Work all day and all night, then early in the morning take a nap for half-an-hour, then jump up, wash your face with ice-water, and go back to work again. You'll be fresh as a lark and feel just fine."

Late one night, having spent the evening editing some troublesome encyclopædia articles, I was weary and yearning for bed, when my telephone rang. It was "Santcho Pantcho." "Say, we are working all night to-night. The Old Man says to ask you if you want to come up?" I groaned under my breath and said, "All right, tell him I'll be right up." The laboratory was brightly lighted up; Edison and Santcho Pantcho and a group of Muckers were there. Edison's son Charlie was there, pottering with something at one of the desks. The Old Man hailed me with exaggerated cordiality. "Say," he called, "let's you and I go to work on your damned problem to-night and make a resolution not to go to sleep until we have solved it!" This sounded to me like an invitation to join a suicide club. I pleaded, "Mr. Edison, you know I have been at my problem for months; I have tried every reasonable thing I could think of, and no result, not even a lead!"—"That's just where your trouble has been, you have tried only reasonable things. Reasonable things never work. Thank God you can't think up any more reasonable things, so you'll have to begin thinking up *unreasonable* things to try, and now you'll hit the solution in no time. After that you can take a nap," he added reassuringly.

Sometime between midnight and one o'clock Charlie Edison complained to his father that he was getting "kind of dopey" and would like to take a *little* nap. "Well," said the Old Man, "if you *got* to sleep, go lie down under the table in the corner; nobody will step on you there." Charlie carried out the suggestion literally and was soon fast asleep on the floor under a table. About two in the morning, Mrs. Edison drove over, worried about Charlie. The Old Man emphasized that Charlie was safe where he would not be stepped on. Charlie's sleeping on the hard floor did not meet with Mrs. Edison's approval. She next disapproved of Mr. Edison's expectorating on the floor and politely offered to provide a spittoon, but he declined, saying that the floor itself was the surest spittoon because you never missed it. Charlie, however, was taken home to sleep.

We all chatted intimately while briskly at work, Edison keeping us alert by telling one good story after another. We were talking about



mental concentration, and Edison brought up a remarkable instance from his own experience. "You know," he said, "when I was a young fellow I used to be a telegraph operator. I was a pretty fast worker in those days; and to work real fast you gotta keep your mind on just what you're doin' and forgit everything else. Well, one night a number of messages came over the wire, and I received them as fast as they ticked in. All at once I hear the newsboys in the street hollering an extra and a lot of commotion and excitement going on. I ran out to see what'd happened and I hear, 'President Lincoln assassinated!' I asked how they'd got the news. A man said, 'You damn fool, didn't you just git the message yourself?' True enough, I had received the message a while earlier, but I had never got its meaning. My mind must have been glued pretty fast to my work for me to have missed the meaning of such a message!" He had told the story so vividly that we believed it to be an actual experience.

At six in the morning I went home and to bed. At eleven I was back at the laboratory. The Old Man frowned on my reporting for work so late. He said I should have felt much better if I had not gone to bed at all.

Later in the day I was compounding new mixtures of soaps and waxes for phonograph cylinders. Santcho Pantcho was deftly constructing a modified form of phonograph reproducer designed by his master. The Old Man was slumped in a chair close by, his feet comfortably crossed on top of the work desk. From time to time he made liberal use of his ubiquitous spittoon. After a while the Old Man fell asleep. His beautiful head began going down, down, then up with a start; down, down, down, then up with a start. Some sentimental person might have found inspiration in viewing the magnificent intellect at rest. But Santcho Pantcho only poked his finger under Edison's nose and wailed, "Look at this blankety blank. He tells the world he never sleeps, but he is fast asleep like this pretty near all the time. He just don't believe in nobody else sleeping!" Which was Santcho Pantcho's unpolished way of saying what Dumas *père* had once said of Napoleon.

I, too, saw Edison asleep at various times in various safe corners. If one approached him he was instantly wide awake, ready to answer any question. In another instant he would be fast asleep again. The twilight state, half-asleep, half-awake, seemed to be foreign to his physiology, or psychology. No, he was really sincere in preaching that sleep was a habit which could be almost dispensed with. His own great recuperative power, which made it possible for him to go long stretches with little sleep, was an important factor in his miraculous achievement. You may say it was an essential ingredient of his "genius."

## V

Education was another topic that Edison knew nothing of but loved to talk about. He had not had any formal education himself, and one day he expressed to me in his picturesque way his belief that schooling would have done him more harm than good; in which belief I concur. A cub reporter from a Brooklyn newspaper had come to interview him about his storage battery. I offered to leave the room, but the Old Man told me to stay and listen, and later see if I could find any resemblance between the actual conversation and the report printed in the morning paper. While the reporter was being ushered in, the Old Man disguised himself to resemble the heroic image of "The Great Inventor, Thomas A. Edison" graven in the imagination of those who have no imagination. Suddenly gone were his natural boyishness of manner, his happy hooliganism. His features froze into immobility, he became statuesque in the armchair, and his unblinking eyes assumed a faraway look like a circus lion thinking of the Nubian desert. He did not stir until the reporter tiptoed right up to him; then he slowly turned his head, as if reluctant to lose the vision of the Nubian desert. The interview itself was insignificant and lasted only a few minutes. Certainly not one word was said about Edison's schooling. Next morning the Old Man brought me the Brooklyn paper, saying, "Read this." The youngster had made a big spread of the interview. He told with enthusiasm how under his tactful and skillful questioning, Edison had abandoned his customary reticence and had for once unbosomed himself as to his beginnings; how he had admitted with becoming modesty to having been an exceptionally bright pupil at school, often astounding his teachers by searching questions, by keen and quick answers. And while thus unbosoming himself, Mr. Edison had *looked* every inch the Great Inventor that he was, verily the Wizard of Menlo Park.

"Well," said the Old Man, "didn't I tell you so? What do you think of this reporter chap now?" I said, "I am lost in admiration. *He* certainly deserves to make headway in the world. But do tell me, Mr. Edison, is it true that you were unusually bright at school?" He glared at me with a sudden fierce contempt and yelled, "School? I've never been to school a day in my life! D'you think I would have amounted to anything if I had gone to school?" And he turned and quietly strolled away from me, his hands behind his back. I was annoyed. I knew that he said this to me purposely, with my long schooling as a target.

But so far as his own career was concerned he was right. Con-

ventional schooling is an excellent thing for ordinary pedestrian man; it delouses him, it spreads a coat of varnish over his rawness, sometimes it embalms him alive. But do not tame the eagle. Had the Wright brothers been schooled they would have known too much to undertake so mad a thing as flying in the sky. Had Edison been formally schooled he would not have had the audacity to create such impossible things as the phonograph.

Edison wanted to see education, especially college education, revolutionized by throwing out all useless things. I wanted to see college education reformed by throwing out most of the "useful" things. And on this subject I once argued with him until my eyes popped.

Edison's question as to why colleges didn't teach "somep'n useful," I first countered with Bible wisdom. In the version of a great modern poet, when Judas raises his voice for consistent utilitarianism, Jesus gently reproves him with the question, "Who knows what is useful and what is not useful?" But the wisdom and poetry of this were lost on Edison. I argued on. I endeavored to analyze for him the educated mind. The object of education, I said, was to develop in the mind the habit of thinking in an orderly manner instead of jumping about like a flea, the habit and the patience to dwell on a given subject until it is digested and assimilated; to exercise the mind in discriminating between what is true and what is false, between what is beautiful and what is ugly; to exercise it unceasingly in recognizing and avoiding the pitfalls of appearance and the deadly traps of preconceived opinion; and to keep all this up until the mind is finely attuned to vibrate in generous response to all that is genuine—in nature, in science, in art. "We say briefly," said I, "the object of education is the discipline of the mind."

"Yeah," he shouted shrilly back, "but all this disciplining of the mind that you are yelling about can be accomplished just as well while teaching the boys somep'n *useful*. Why teach them Latin? Latin is a dead language; the professor himself doesn't know how to order in Latin a sirloin steak with potatoes. Who the hell uses Latin outside the Catholic church? And *there* nobody understands it except the Pope, so even he can only use Latin when he is talkin' to himself."—"Mr. Edison," I gently reasoned with him at the top of my lungs, "the stately periods, the delicate shadings of Latin are like intricate finger exercises in learning to play a musical instrument." But I was not convincing, I was only irritating him. He shouted, "Then mebbe college boys ought to spend a couple of years exercising on the Jew's harp so's to become good at making faces? That'd be jist as useful." But I stuck to the defense of the usefulness of the useless in education.

"Mr. Edison," said I, "take physical training. Pupils are not taught actually useful things, like digging a ditch, moving a piano, breaking somebody else's jaw. Have you ever watched a physical-training class? Nothing but useless motions: they bend over and back, over and back; then they are made to wave their arms, swing their legs—and all apparently to no purpose; yet these useless motions are calculated to educate the muscular system as a whole, and the result is accomplished far better than it would be by the exclusively useful things which *you* would recommend, like moving pianos and breaking jaws."

I thought I had won the day. But the Old Man got up, registering hopeless contempt for me, and by way of a parting insult shouted, "Say, *you* ought to be a college professor!" And he strolled away.

That hurt. It was not what he said; for there are some vivacious men among college professors. It was the hateful way in which he said it. If you did not understand his words, you would have thought he yelled, "Say, *you* are a damn fool! You ought to be a washerwoman!" I followed him with furious eyes, and I said in my heart, "Uncle, whatever you have in your head must arise there by spontaneous generation. To get something in from outside, one would have to drill a little hole in your thick skull and pump it in under pressure."

No, Edison did not have what the French call *une intelligence ouverte*, which is poorly translated by the English "a receptive mind."

He once asked me to explain to him why the formula of water is written  $H_2O$  and not  $H_4O_2$  or  $H_6O_3$ , which would represent equally well the composition of water. We settled down comfortably in chairs, and I began. In the simplest terms I started lecturing to him on Avogadro's law, on Cannizzaro's formulation of compounds. . . . He listened bright-eyed for about five minutes; then the sparkle began dying in his eyes; he became absent-minded; and presently I knew that I had lost my audience, and my lecture died in a sigh of regret. What I could have taught any average college bozo, I could not teach to this, one of the most brilliant men of the century.

## VI

Edison had a prodigious memory, and his mind was an immense junk yard of heterogeneous information. On one occasion I needed the prices of a long list of commercial waxes and went to ask him where I might find a wholesale price list. He was asleep on an untidy mattress on the floor of a kind of pantry. I started backing out, but he was already awake. "What do you want?" I told him and showed him my list. He said, "You don't need any price list; I'll give you the prices." Incredulous, I began calling out the waxes, and he shot back

their prices one after another. He was snoring again before I had left the room. Afterwards I was able to check up most of his prices, and they were exact almost to a penny. He was master of his mental junk yard.

I understood that he had twice read through the whole of Watts's voluminous *Dictionary of Chemistry*. This is as if, to acquire knowledge of English, you would twice read through *Webster's Unabridged* from A to Z.

No wonder conventional academic people would get the impression that his only gift was a shrewd capacity for finding trained men to make inventions for him. A couple of years after the incidents of this sketch, a student at New York University asked me to get him a summer job with Edison: it would be an instructive experience and enable him to save some money toward his Senior year. I got in touch with the Old Man through Santcho Pantcho. In a few minutes came the reply, "The Old Man says to send him over; he'll give him a job." The youngster walked on air. When, however, he reported back as a Senior in the fall, his feet were all on the ground: the Edison experience was a sad disillusionment; instead of an inspired inventor, he had found an awfully commonplace sort of man, who could not pass a college entrance examination in math and knew less organic chemistry than he, the Senior, himself. I pointed out that it would be uncharitable to overlook the magic that Edison had taught us to perform. "If you would like to see some," said I, "turn that switch button on the wall." But the youngster went away respectfully unconvinced: you see, we had made good progress at the University toward conventionalizing him for the degree of Bachelor of Science.

Academic and scientific men were, in turn, puzzling to Edison. Although he was somewhat overawed—maybe *because* he was overawed—by their systematic intellectual equipment, and employed them as the best available research assistants, he found great amusement in telling of their mistakes and in playing his sharp wit on them without mercy. "Say," he began one day, "what do *you* think is the matter with college men?"—"I grieve for all human beings," said I, "college men as well as the yokels."—"Wait," he interrupted, "let me tell you of an experience I once had with the crushing of big rocks. You see, in getting usable iron ore from rock, one of the main difficulties is to crush the rock. The chunks of rock which I produced by economical blasting were about as big as a piano. I made up my mind to crush those big babies by machine. I had engineers from the best colleges working for me; so I called them in and told them to design a crushing machine. They got out their slide-rules and mathematical tables and went to work.

Well, sir, they figured and figured, but finally they came back to report, 'Mr. Edison, the thing can't be done; such a machine is impossible. According to the tables of strength of materials, the crushing machine would not crush the big rocks, the big rocks would crush the crushing machine.' And they were very much pleased with themselves for keeping me from trying such a fool thing. I said, 'All right, much obliged for putting me straight.' Then Freddie and I got a gang of Irishmen, just common day laborers, no college education that you'd notice—and we built a crushing plant. I still use this kind of crushing machine in my cement works near Phillipsburg. I'll take you up there some day and you can see for yourself: my machine crushed the rocks all right, the rocks don't crush the machine; it's working fine, smooth as a sewing machine, no trouble whatever. Now, what do you think of those college engineers?"

I think one reason that he particularly enjoyed telling his stories about college people to me was, as I have said before, that my theoretical turn of mind disturbed him, and he persistently tried to re-educate and win me over to his empirical methods. I even suspect that some of his stories may have been embellished or altogether invented for this pedagogical purpose. One in particular tended to exceed the bounds of my credulity. "I had a fine electrical engineer working here," he told me, "by name of Kennelly. They made him a college professor afterwards. Fine mathematician, hard worker. When I made up my mind to build a car to be pulled by electricity instead of by steam or by horses, I told Kennelly about it and asked him to figure out for me the thickness of the current carrier that I'd have to use. The idea of an electric train interested him. He went to work with a ream of paper and his slide-rule—Kennelly never went anywhere or did anything without his slide-rule. He worked day and night on the problem for a couple of weeks, then came to me very much disappointed. 'Mr. Edison,' said he, 'an electric train is not a practical possibility. To carry the heavy current required, the current conductor would have to be three feet in diameter.'—I said, 'Well, Kennelly, no use trying to do what's impossible. I suppose we'll have to let steam or the horses keep on pulling the cars forever.'" Edison spat his disgust. "You've seen electric cars running everywhere. Did you ever see one with a trolley wire three feet thick? Well, I told Freddie to build me an electric car, rails and everything, right in the laboratory yard, and after a while we had it running fine. Kennelly came to see it. 'Well,' said I, 'what do you think of my electric train?'—'That's certainly funny,' said he; 'I'll have to go over my computations again.' Then I see him coming back smiling. 'The fault was all mine, Mr. Edison. I made a mistake

in just one decimal place, and that balled up the whole calculation. I've got it all straightened out now; your electric car is all right.'—I said, 'I'm mighty glad to hear you say it. I thought so myself when I saw the car running.'—Now tell me," Edison added, "don't the mathematicians have any common sense at all?"

Was this story true, or was it specially devised for my intellectual reformation? I do not know.

## VII

Was Edison interested in literature? Did he appreciate music? The answer is definitely "no." In a life so thickly crowded with creative events, each event involving a myriad of details demanding concentrated thought, intensive struggle, where was there room for the undisturbed contemplation of, let us say, Tolstoy's immense canvases of *War and Peace*? When once I urged him to read this, the greatest of novels, he told me drily that he had no time for "such things."

If music is a language, it was Greek to Edison. I will not say that he was devoid of a sense of pitch and rhythm. Again and again I saw him fall in with the mood of some jolly bit of musical nonsense and cut dancing capers in front of a phonograph horn. But serious tone poetry was meaningless to him. If he had ever had the patience to listen to Beethoven's phantasy-sonata, he would have been sure that anyone claiming to hear in it a dream of divine nobility was just "pretending."

On one occasion he inveigled me into talking about music: did I like classical music in general? What did I think of Wagner in particular? I said Wagner's heroic poems were certainly dramatic and magnificent, but . . . And I launched out in a pæan of my infinitely more passionate love and veneration of Beethoven's pure music. He interrupted me with, "Come 'ere, I want you to listen to this. I've got Wagner's top notch best here for you." Thereupon he set a phonograph going and settled down with an expression of keen musical enjoyment. A most incredible and macabre concert of sound assailed me out of the horn. Seeing my gaping unbelief, Edison asked with mock surprise, "*Now* what's the matter? I thought you liked Wagner? Don't you like classical music any more?" And he shook with laughter. What he had done was this: he had an old experimental machine with a reversible mechanism; the record must have been a many-voiced chorus with orchestral accompaniment; and he reproduced it for me backward! You have seen the bizarre effects of moving pictures run backward. Well, those are as nothing compared with a lively piece of music done in reverse. And Edison was as happy as a schoolboy to

have played this practical joke on one who pretended to be a lover of the classics. Of course it was only a joke, but I really believe that Wagner impressed him merely as a lot of din.

His records in those days were mostly catchy tunes and plumber's family entertainment pieces in the vein of "Mary, Gimme My Boots." When a phonograph salesman returned from Europe and reported to him that in Germany people demanded "grand opera and other classical stuff," he merely said, "I don't believe it."

You may ask, "Did not Edison's deafness prevent his hearing any music at all?" It is remarkable how well he did hear some things. I *know* that he heard the faintest sounds from the phonograph. Part of my problem was the elimination of acoustic roughness from the records. I once obtained a record that I thought entirely free from foreign sounds and was proudly demonstrating it to him. He listened for a while, then turned on me. "What's the matter," he asked, "are you deaf? Nothin' silent about *that* record!" It was disconcerting to be asked such a question by a deaf person. I listened more intently, and finally caught a distinct swishing noise behind the sounds of the record proper!

Edison's religion has been pried into by all sorts of people. Some classify him as an agnostic; others tell of his belief in the immortality of the soul and try to picture him as at heart a good Christian. As a matter of fact, his mind was so wrapped up in invention problems that he gave little serious thought to anything else. I believe, however, that when his thoughts did turn toward Heaven, he thought of the God of nature from a curious, fellow-craftsman's point of view as "the great Inventor." One morning at my desk, he was playing with a mass of mercury in a glass beaker. He asked me if I did not think mercury was a miraculous kind of material. I said I did. Suddenly his face lengthened into an unwonted look of reverence. "People," said he, "call me a great inventor. *I'm* no inventor worth talkin' about. When I think that I can't build even the damndest kind of a fool who could think and speak some damn fool thing of his own, then I know that I am just a hell of an inventor." Then, his finger pointing heavenward, he added, "*That's* the *real* Inventor!"

#### VIII

Edison, as I have said, enjoyed telling of case after case in which trained scientists and engineers had pronounced something impossible, yet which he had made work by purely empirical methods. It seemed interesting, therefore, to find out when and why he himself would discard an idea or a project as impracticable. So one day I proposed to



him the following question: "Physics teaches that wherever there exists a difference in temperature, the flow of heat from the higher to the lower temperature can be made to drive an engine. Now, the lower strata of the air are warmer than the higher strata; also, in the ocean, the water near the surface is warmer than the water at some depth. Theoretically it ought to be possible to utilize those differences in temperature-levels to drive an engine and obtain mechanical work indefinitely. Of course, such an engine is an utter impossibility practically. But if the idea of building such an engine should pop into your head, what would be *your* exact reasons for discarding it as impracticable?" His answer was disappointing. He looked at me with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes and burst out, in his deaf man's treble, "If you start building engines in the sky, you'll go crazy, like T. There's plenty to be invented within three feet of the ground. No need going to the moon. An invention is no good unless it's commercial and people are willing to pay for it. There's no money in sky engines, see?"

"If that's the way you feel," said I, "if your value of an invention is fixed entirely by how much money you can get out of it, then it's a pity you wasted so much trouble on your lamp, your phonograph, and your other stunts. You should have spent your life manufacturing patent medicines. The sarsaparilla boys have made a lot more money than you have." The sourest expression came into his face—an expression of pain and surprise at being outrageously misunderstood. "That's an entirely different thing," said he: "*those* people are nothin' but degenerates!" And he quit the argument.

No, his aim was not just to make money. Though he never spoke of "service to humanity" or his "mission in life," he was unshakeable in a kind of idealism of his own. He would not spend his energy and ingenuity on the construction of, say, such a curiosity as a mechanical man. Commercial demand was his measure of need. By giving, or rather selling, to the world what it needs and demands, he was performing a fascinating task, and all the nations of the earth would long remember him with gratitude and honor him for what he had done to enable them to live in greater safety and comfort. The fiery passion of his life, like Napoleon's, was to earn permanent fame. Once I told him playfully that if he had been born three hundred years earlier he would have been a famous pirate. "You think I would have been famous?" he asked. "Yes," I said with conviction, "*you* would have been famous in *any* time."

Edison's declaration that the famous inventor T. was crazy made me curious as to his attitude toward other famous inventors of our time. So I asked him what he thought of Bell and the telephone. He replied

a little contemptuously, "The telephone was no invention. It was a *discovery*. Don't you know how the telephone was found? One day Bell was fooling with some wires and diaphragms in his laboratory, and suddenly he heard the voice of an assistant over the wire from another room. The telephone was *all there*; the rest was simple. No, the telephone was no real invention; it was an accident. In making an invention you find a need, then deliberately go to work to devise the means to meet that need. Bell never *planned* to invent the telephone."

I was about to conclude that Edison derived no joy from other people's inventions, when he added of his own accord, "If you are looking for a great inventor, take Marconi. *He* knew all the time what he was tryin' to git. It was a turribly hard thing to invent the wireless and it took lots of hard work and ingenuity to invent it, but he *invented* it." And while the Old Man was saying this, his faced lighted up with the warmest and most generous admiration for the famous Italian. I was reminded of the admiration with which he had spoken of the great Inventor in heaven, and became convinced that at least *some* fellow-inventors had Edison's unstinted applause. His failure to praise others was due, not at all to a lack of generosity, but rather to his definition—if you like, his narrow definition—of the word invention.

In conversations with me the Old Man repeatedly spoke of the incandescent lamp. The first material to make a practical commercial filament for the lamp was a species of bamboo discovered in Japan. He had induced the Kew Gardens in England to send him specimens of every species of bamboo known to botanical science. And then, mistrusting the omniscience of the naturalists, he had the daring to fit out a series of expeditions of his own, to search the world for bamboos unknown to botany. "I picked out some extra tough looking Irishmen," he told me, "and sent them to different parts of the world—into the interiors of China and Japan, into the jungles of South America, and other wild places. The Irish, you know, are good fighters, but even at that I didn't expect to see them again alive. I thought they'd sure be eaten up by cannibals or lions or somep'n. They came back, though: the cannibals and lions must have thought they weren't quite tender enough to eat."

## IX

I must turn back to the story of my own modest problem. Once again I was overwhelmed by the conviction that the excellence of Aylsworth's wax was like the highest peak of a mountain range: no matter which way you got away from it, you reached a lower level. I saw myself as a victim of the insane obstinacy of an eccentric—my scientific hopes

blasted, spending my entire life trying to improve an accursed wax that I *knew* could not be improved. On an early occasion I firmly summed up my feeling to the Old Man. "All my experiments of well over a year," said I, "prove conclusively that Aylsworth's wax is the best possible of its kind. The slightest disturbance of its balanced composition by any reasonable or unreasonable softener can only make it worse. My problem is, therefore, nothing but a wild goose chase—a problem without a solution, and the sooner we abandon it, the less of your money and of my life will be utterly wasted!" And I added in my mind, "Well, you Rocky Mountain, have I shaken you this time?" With a hand cupped around his ear, his face a mask, the Old Man had waited till I was through with my speech. But he was not shaken. "Mebbe you know best," he said, "but that's not *my* opinion. You know, I've been in the inventor business for over thirty-three years, and *my* experience is that for every problem that the Lord has made he has also made a solution. If you and I can't find the solution, then let's honestly admit that you and I are damn fools, but why blame it on the Lord and say *He* created somep'n impossible—a problem that's got no solution?"—I said, "All right, if that's the way you feel," and went back to my "mucking." Deep in my heart I could not but admire his superhuman obstinacy, but I also could not help deploring my fate; and since he had long been coercing me to renounce the God-given power to think, and urging me to try unreasonable things, I promised myself the pleasure of next reporting to him the trial of chipped glass as a wax softener.

Then it came like a flash of lightning. Not the Edison way. On a Sunday evening I lay on my couch with a headache, smoking cigarettes. I tried to keep my mind a blank, but after a year or more of being held down to my problem by Edison, I could no longer shut out the waxes, not even in my sleep. And suddenly—through headache and daze—I saw the solution! True, the balanced chemical make-up of the Aylsworth wax must not be disturbed. But by a physico-chemical process which instantly quickened in my mind, I could modify the intimate *physical* structure of the wax almost at pleasure, and thus bring about almost any desired change in hardness. Not a possibility, this time, that might result in another painful disappointment on the morrow, but a positive solution of my despicable problem.

I was restrained from rushing to the laboratory that evening. But the first thing next morning I was at my desk, and half an hour later I had a record on a softened wax cylinder. So soft was the wax that the deep grooves made by the recording needle actually overlapped, and under the microscope the surface of the grooves was like glass—not a trace of chipping or roughness. The acoustic reproduction was cor-

respondingly excellent. It was the solution: I had learned to *think* waxes, and the solution had come without effort—after a year of Edisonian blind groping that had led nowhere (except to my having learned to *think* waxes!).

I found the Old Man sitting at a table, a microscope within reach. Without a word I handed him the precious cylinder. He put it under the microscope and focused on a random point: deep grooves. Elsewhere, more deep grooves and more and more, all smooth as glass. "How'd you git it?"—I said with malicious pleasure, "I got it by *theoretical* chemistry! It took exactly fifteen minutes to git it!" He did not argue. I explained to him the theory of the process and he listened with genuine interest. After all, the important thing was the solution, not the way it had been reached.

A word about Edison's personal appearance among us. In recent years you have seen him in the movies. But there he looked like a benevolent wreck, freshly raised from the dead, shaking his head as in blessing upon all the Thursday-night housemaids being civilized by his inventions. At the time of my association with him he was handsome. No creased trousers, no swanky ties, nothing like that, to be sure. Yet to appreciate his fine head, his strong features, the happy-hooligan light out of his gray eyes, it was not necessary to possess the artistic penetration of the little girl who discovered that Abraham Lincoln was beautiful.

Edison was the most remarkable man I have known, and I have tried here to picture him faithfully as I saw him. If he chose to spit on the floor and to retain such "undignified" eccentricities of speech as "somep'n," "git" for get, and "doos" for does, it was, I believe, because of his contempt for the conventional and the artificial, which appeared to him beneath the dignity of man. I did not dare tamper with the remarkable truth of his personality and make him look—as he said his painted portraits made him look—"like a United States senator" by resorting to such stratagems as tidying up his speech and endowing him with a solemnity of manner which was not his. That would have been like forcing patent-leather boots upon the immortal Hephæstus.

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# Curie

## The Story of Marie and Pierre

BERNARD JAFFE (1896- )

Bernard Jaffe was born in New York City. He received his B.S. from the College of the City of New York in 1916. After an interlude of fighting in France, he resumed his education and in 1922 took an M.A. in chemistry at Columbia. While teaching chemistry at Jamaica High School on Long Island, he wrote his first book, a textbook of typical problems called *Chemical Calculations* (1926). Then he set to work on a book about the lives of the great chemists. He traced the history of chemistry from Bernard Trevisan, the alchemist who "looked for gold in a dunghill," to Irving Langmuir, who analyzed the structure of the atom. He called the book *Crucibles*. When it was finished, he submitted it for the *Francis Bacon Award* sponsored by Simon and Schuster and the *Forum* magazine. It was chosen out of several hundred manuscripts on all sorts of subjects as the one best suited to "carry on the conscious adventure of humanizing knowledge." In the spring of 1930, Jaffe, then teaching at the Girls' Commercial High School in Brooklyn, received the prize of \$7,500. Since the publication of *Crucibles* later in the year, he has written *The New World of Chemistry* (1935), another textbook, and *The Outposts of Science* (1935), a story of present-day researches in several scientific fields.

*Crucibles* stands out in the long line of biographical treatments of science which has followed Paul De Kruif's *Microbe Hunters*. Jaffe writes with more restraint than the explosive De Kruif. He tells the story in a simple, unadorned prose, usually letting the drama arise naturally from his material. His account of the Curies does not go deeply either into the chemistry of radium or the minds of the scientists who made it possible. It is what it pretends to be, an effective popular treatment of a story which every educated man should know.

Mme. Curie died on July 6, 1934. The definitive biography, written by her daughter Eve, was published in 1937.

INTO A DESOLATE REGION in Southern Colorado, in the latter part of 1920, came a small army of men to dig for ore. Every acre of America had been searched for such a mineral. Twenty years before it could have been imported from Austria, but conditions had changed. The Austrian Government had placed an embargo upon its exportation. So

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Joseph M. Flannery—he was the leader of this band of men—had to be satisfied with the sand in barren Colorado. There was nothing left to do but dig it out of this God-forsaken place.

Flannery's gang, three hundred strong, worked feverishly to collect tons of this sand called carnotite. They dug, sweated and often swore at the insanity of a boss who took them so far away from civilization. Into wagons they threw the canary yellow ore, and sure-footed burros hauled it over eighteen miles of roadless land half a mile above sea level. At the end of that mean trail Flannery had set up a concentration mill, the nearest water supply to the ore mines. In the mill five hundred tons of carnotite were chemically treated until only one hundred tons were left. This dirt was crushed into powder, packed into hundred-pound sacks and shipped sixty-five miles to Placerville. At this railway center the bags were loaded into freight cars destined for Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, twenty-five hundred miles away.

Here two hundred men were waiting to reduce this mass of powder to but a few hundred pounds. Workers skilled in the handling of chemicals used tons of acids, water and coal to extract the invaluable treasure from the ore. Not a grain of the precious stuff hidden in this mound of powder was lost in innumerable boilings, filterings and crystallizations. Months passed, and at last all that remained of the Colorado sand was sent, under special guard, to the research laboratories of the Standard Chemical Company in Pittsburgh. And now began the final task—a careful and painstaking procedure of separation. A year's work to extract from these five hundred tons of dust just a few crystals of salt!

For this thimbleful of glistening salt five hundred men had struggled with a mountain of ore. It was the most precious substance in the world—a hundred thousand times more valuable than gold. For this gram of salt one hundred thousand dollars had been spent. A fabulous price for a magic stone!

Into a steel box lined with thick walls of lead, enclosed in a casket of polished mahogany, were placed these tiny crystals in ten small tubes. The precious casket, weighing fifty pounds, was locked and guarded in the company's safe to await the arrival of a visitor from France.

On May 20, 1921, in the reception room of the White House stood the President of the United States. Around him sat the French Ambassador, the Polish Minister, scientists, Cabinet members, judges and other men and women well known in the life of America. Before the President stood a frail, delicate figure dressed in black with a black lace scarf thrown over her shoulders. The room was fragrant with the scent of flowers—she loved flowers. This woman, who had been honored

by kings and queens, stood here before the spokesman of a hundred thousand women. The President began to speak: "It has been your fortune to accomplish an immortal work for humanity. I have been commissioned to present to you this little phial of radium. To you we owe knowledge and possession of it, and so to you we give it, confident that in your possession it will be the means to increase the field of useful knowledge to alleviate suffering among the children of man."

Radium—that was the magic element which had brought Flannery and his gang of men into desolate Colorado to dig for carnotite. Almost twenty-five years before, this woman, with but one assistant, her beloved Pierre, had accomplished the miracle of Flannery's five hundred men backed by a great modern financial organization with every scientific invention at its disposal. She had accomplished this wonderful work in an abandoned old shed in Paris. She had solved a problem and blazed a trail that Flannery and others have since travelled with less travail.

To-day, in the chief laboratory of the Radium Institute of the University of Paris, this woman, now past sixty, works silently with her test tubes and flasks while all the world waits eagerly for another miracle. The years have not completely broken this immortal bottle-washer. She is still above average height and broadshouldered. Her splendidly arched brow is crowned with a mass of wavy gray hair, once blond. Her soft, expressive, light blue eyes are full of sadness.

Prophetic Mendeléeff had met this woman when she was a young girl mixing chemicals in her cousin's laboratory in her native city of Warsaw. He knew her father, professor of mathematics and physics in the high school. Mendeléeff predicted a great future for Marie if she stuck to her chemistry. Marie looked up at her father, smiled, and said nothing. This modest and retiring girl, who had lost her mother when still an infant, loved her father passionately. Every Saturday evening he would sit before the lamp and read masterpieces of Polish prose and poetry. She would learn long passages by heart and recite them to him. Her father was to her one of the three great minds of history—Karl Gauss, mathematician and astronomer, and Sir Isaac Newton were the other two. "My child," remarked the professor when she confided this to him, "you have forgotten the other great mind—Aristotle." And little Marie accepted his amendment in all seriousness.

Poland in those days was not a free Poland. It was part of Russia. Since 1831 the czarist government from St. Petersburg persecuted its refractory subjects, who had unsuccessfully revolted in the hope of gaining complete independence. Tyrannical Russia imposed many restrictions. The Polish language was forbidden in the newspapers, churches and schools. The old University of Warsaw, whose professors were

compelled to teach in the Russian language, was only a ghost of what it had once been. And the Russian secret service was omnipresent.

When Marie was seventeen, conditions at home compelled her to become governess in the family of a Russian nobleman. She kept in constant touch with the political affairs of her native country. Poland under Russian rule was suffering. Secretly there had sprung up groups of young men and women who vowed to overthrow the foreign oppressor. Among the most fervid of these plotters were some of her father's students. They assembled clandestinely to teach in the Polish language those subjects they knew best, and Marie joined one of these groups. She had heard how, four years before her birth, Russian cannon had been fired upon women kneeling in the snow. She hated the Cossacks with their twisted hide whips. She even wrote for a revolutionary sheet—a dangerous practice, but she was as fearless as she was bitter.

The Russian police rounded up some of the young rebels. Marie escaped the net, but to avoid bearing witness against one of her unfortunate friends, she left Warsaw and the hated Russians. In the winter of 1891, at the age of twenty-four, she arrived in Paris. Paris, the city of her scientific triumphs, was a place of bitter suffering during her first years. She rented a small room in a garret; she could afford no better quarters. It was bitter cold in winter time, and stifling hot in the summer. Up five flights of steps she was forced to carry water and the coal for the little stove that gave her some warmth. She had to stint, for her daily expenses, carefully figured, dare not exceed half a franc. Her meals were often reduced to nothing more than bread and chocolate. On the rare occasions when she allowed herself the luxury of a meal of meat and wine she had to acquire a new taste for these foods.

Marie did not mind these privations. She had come to Paris to study and teach. Europe was agog over the strange ions of a young teacher at Stockholm. Pasteur, old and broken in health, was the idol of France. Marie began to dream of a career in science. Strange that she should have such fancies at a time when science was a closed field for women. But she was dreamer enough to believe herself to be the woman whom destiny had selected to play a tremendous rôle in science. Had not Mendeléeff told her so? Quick as a flash, she made up her mind. She went to the Sorbonne and matriculated. It meant washing bottles and taking care of the furnace in the laboratory to meet expenses. But Faraday had done it—why could not Marie?

In the laboratory of Paul Schutzenberger, founder-director of the Municipal School of Physics and Chemistry of Paris, worked Pierre Curie, "a tall young man with auburn hair and limpid eyes." He had



graduated from the Sorbonne, and was now doing research work with his brother Jacques on electrical condensers and the magnetic property of iron. In 1894, at the home of a mutual friend, Marie met Pierre. "I noticed," she wrote later, "the grave and gentle expression of his face, as well as a certain abandon in his attitude suggesting the dreamer absorbed in his reflections."

They began a conversation which naturally concerned scientific matters. How else could Marie have approached this silent man? Then they discussed "certain social and humanitarian subjects." Marie was happy, for "there was between his conceptions and mine, despite the difference between our native countries, a surprising kinship." Pierre, too, was joyful. He was amazed at the learning of this girl, and when he frankly admitted his astonishment, Marie twitted him with, "I wonder, Monsieur, where you have imbibed your strange notions of a woman's limitations."

At twenty-two, Pierre had written, "Women of genius are rare, and the average woman is a positive hindrance to a serious-minded scientist." He was thirty-five now, and his contact with life had not changed his ideas much. Yet Pierre was captivated. He could not hide it, undemonstrative as he usually appeared. He expressed a desire to see this magnetic woman again. Marie walked on air. She wanted to know this dreamer. The sadness of his face drew her to him. Marie came to Professor Paul Schutzenberger and begged for permission to work beside Pierre. Her request was granted, for Schutzenberger was fond of Pierre. The shy, bashful, sixty-five-year-old scientist had devoted his life to the pursuit of science. Pierre, his young, idealistic disciple was a kindred spirit. So here in the laboratory of the Ecole Municipale, Pierre and Marie met day after day as teacher and pupil, suitor and admirer.

Pierre was beginning to experience a radical change of opinion about women. Before long Pierre, who might have been a man of letters, wrote to Marie: "It would be a lovely thing to pass through life together hypnotized in our dreams: your dream for your country, our dream for science. Together we can serve humanity."

Marie was ready to go through life working at his side in the citadel of science. Their courtship was a short and happy one, and in July, 1895, they were married. Pierre, although brought up in a Catholic home, believed in no cult, and Marie at the time was not practicing any religion. Marie's father and sister came from Poland to greet them. It was a civil ceremony. Only a few friends were present. Marie wore the same dress as usual. It was a simple wedding. They had neither time nor money for elaborate ceremonies. They were both intensely happy.

The problem of furnishing a home was not a very serious one for

two beings who cared nothing for convention. They rented three rooms overlooking a garden and bought a little furniture—just the barest necessities. Pierre was made professor of physics at the Ecole Municipale. He was earning now six thousand francs a year, and Marie continued with her studies. They allowed themselves no luxuries except the purchase of two bicycles for short week-end trips to the country, when they went picnicking alone among the chickens and flowers which Marie loved.

They were both back in the laboratory when, in Wurtzburg, Wilhelm Konrad Roentgen discovered a ray of great penetrating power. On January 4, 1896, he described these X-rays, as he called them, to the members of the Berlin Physical Society. And hardly had the news of the discovery of these X-rays, which could penetrate solid objects and reveal the bony framework of a man, reached the world when an accident of great importance happened in the dark-room of the modest laboratory of Professor Henri Antoine Becquerel. It was known that phosphorescent substances after exposure to sunlight became luminous in the dark. He was trying to find out whether such phosphorescent substances gave off Roentgen's rays.

It was not the sort of accident to reach the front pages of newspapers, although its result was world-shaking. From this accidental observation came a train of events which culminated in the triumphal work of Mme. Curie. Quite by accident, Becquerel had placed a piece of uranium ore upon a sensitized photographic plate lying on a table in his dark-room. Uranium salts had been known since 1789; they had been used to color glass. There was nothing very remarkable about this substance.

But one morning Becquerel found more than he expected. He noticed that in this completely darkened room the plate covered with black paper had been changed under the very spot on which the ore was placed. He could not understand this! Perhaps someone had been playing a prank. Now he deliberately tried the experiment to satisfy himself. The same effect was noticed. The photographic plate had been affected without any visible light and only under the uranium ore. How could he explain this strange phenomenon? He repeated the experiment with other ores containing the element uranium. In every case a spot was left on the plate. He analyzed the ores to determine the amounts of actual uranium they contained, and saw at once that the intensity of effect was directly proportional to the amount of uranium present in each ore.

Becquerel, famous scion of a family eminent for its researches on fluorescent light, was ready to draw a definite conclusion. He announced

that it was the uranium salt present in each ore which was *alone* responsible for the strange effect produced on the photographic plate. But he did not cling very long to this belief. He tested the chief ore of uranium, pitchblende, a mineral which came from northern Bohemia. It was a strange rock; it puzzled him. Instead of giving a photographic effect directly proportional to the amount of uranium present, this ore was much more powerful than its uranium content could account for. Becquerel now made the simplest inference. "There must be," he said, "another element with power to affect a photographic plate many times greater than uranium itself."

Marie's lucky day had dawned. Becquerel recognized in this Polish girl at the Sorbonne a scientist of the first order. He had watched her at work in the laboratory. Even as she weighed chemicals and adjusted apparatus he observed the dexterity of a trained and gifted experimenter. Yes, she had heard the startling news. He presented the problem to her. Would she undertake this piece of research?

She talked it over with Pierre. Her enthusiasm captivated him. She told her husband that, in her opinion, the increased activity of the ore from Bohemia was due to a hitherto unknown element more powerful than uranium. "This substance," she told Pierre, "cannot be one of the known elements, because those have already been examined; it must be a new element." Pierre was working on crystals, and she on the magnetic properties of metals in solution. Both dropped all their work to join in the great adventure of tracking down the unknown cause of the great power of pitchblende. Mendeléeff, hearing of this, consulted his Periodic Table. There was room for such an element. Marie was bound to find it.

The Curies had no money to undertake the search—they borrowed some. Neither had they any idea how much time it would take. They wrote to the Austrian Government, which owned the pitchblende mines. The Austrian officials were willing to help. Soon, from the mines of Joachimsthal, there arrived in Paris one ton of pitchblende. Marie was sure that in this hill of sand the undiscovered metal lay hidden.

Those were hectic days for the Curies. They worked incessantly. Not a moment was wasted; the search was too alluring. They boiled and cooked the great mound of dirt, filtered and separated impurity after impurity. When the poison gases threatened to stifle them under the leaky roof of their improvised laboratory, Marie herself lifted and moved large vats of liquid to the adjoining yard. It was the work of men, protested Pierre, but Marie told him she was strong. She could do superhuman work. For hours at a time she stood beside the boiling pots stirring the thick liquids with a great iron rod almost as large as

herself. The stifling fumes made that shed a hell, but to Marie beside her Pierre it was heaven. There stood Pierre lifting great batches of heavy chemicals and dreaming of scientific conquests.

"We lived in a preoccupation as complete as that of a dream," remarked Marie years later. When the cold was so intense that they could not continue their work, she would brew some tea and draw closer to the cast-iron stove. The bitter winter of 1896 came and found that mad couple still laboring in their hangar. Marie was bound to break under this terrific strain. Soon pneumonia made her take to bed, and it was three months before she was strong enough to return to her boiling cauldrons. Pierre, too, at the end of each day's work was broken with fatigue. But the search went on.

In the month of September, 1897, a daughter was born to the Curies. Pierre's boyhood friends came to congratulate them. Debierne, discoverer of actinium, Perrin, the molecule counter, and Georges Urbain were among the visitors. The mother, as she lay helpless, kept thinking of her job under the shed. When the child was but a week old, Marie walked into that workshop again to test out something that had occurred to her as she lay in bed. However, she cared for baby Irene with the same devotion she gave to science. Pierre, of course, helped her, and in the evenings when he returned from the shack to assist Marie, they spoke now of three things—baby Irene, science and Poland.

It became a serious difficulty for Marie to take care of Irene and continue her scientific work. But a way out was soon found. Pierre's mother had just died and his father, a retired physician with a taste for research, came to live with them. Grandpa watched and cared for his little girl, while her parents grappled with a mound of sand.

In the meantime, the pile of pitchblende had dwindled down to a hundred pounds. They made their separations by a method of electrical measurement which exposed the more powerful fractions of their material from the inactive parts. Often in the midst of some chemical operation which could not be suspended, Pierre would work for hours at a stretch, while Marie prepared hasty meals which they ate as they continued their task. Another year of heroic work. Again Marie was ill. Pierre was ready to give up, but Marie was courageous. In spite of all their sufferings, Marie confessed that "it was in that miserable shed that we passed the best and happiest years of our life."

They were fighting a lone battle. No one came to help. When almost two years of constant work were behind them, the news of the great experiment leaked out, though they had tried to keep it secret. Pierre was invited to accept a chair of physics at the University of Geneva. It was a tempting offer. He made the trip to Switzerland, but was back

before long. The great work would be in danger if he were to accept. Marie was happy again.

By now they had extracted a small amount of bismuth salts which showed the presence of a very active element. This element appeared to be about three hundred times as potent as uranium. Marie set to work and isolated from this bismuth salt a substance which resembled nickel. Perhaps it was a new element. She subjected it to every known test, and in July, 1898, she announced the discovery of a hitherto unknown element, which she named "polonium" in honor of her beloved country. The reality of this new element was at first questioned. It was suspected to be a mixture of bismuth and some other element. But its existence was soon confirmed.

Others might have been satisfied with this discovery of an element hundreds of times more active than uranium. But not the Curies. They kept working with portions of that ton of pitchblende, now boiled down to amounts small enough to fit into a flask or test tube. This fraction of chemicals appeared to possess properties much stronger than even polonium. Could it be possible? Marie never doubted it. She looked at this bit of material, the residue of two years of tedious extractions by repeated crystallizations. It was a very tiny amount; she must be more than careful now. She examined every drop of solution that came trickling through the filter. She tested every grain of solid that clung to the filter paper in her funnel. Not an iota of the precious stuff must escape her. Marie and Pierre plodded on. One night they walked to the shed. It had been a dissecting room years ago; it was now a spookier place. Instead of "stiffs" laid out for dissection, they "saw on all sides the feebly luminous silhouettes of the bottles and capsules containing their product. They were like earthly stars—these glowing tubes in that poor rough shack." They knew that they were near their goal.

Bémont, in charge of the laboratory at the Sorbonne, was called in to help in the final separations. Bottle after bottle, crystallizing dish after crystallizing dish, was cleaned until not a speck of dust was left to contaminate the last product of their extractions. Marie did the cleaning. She was the bottle washer who was first to gaze upon a few crystals of salt of another new element—the element *radium*, destined to cause greater overturning of chemical theories than any other element that had ever been isolated. This was the end of that long trail under the abandoned old shed in Paris.

Pierre was given the position of professor of physics at the Sorbonne, and Marie was put in charge of the physics lectures at the Higher Normal School for Girls at Sièvres, near Paris. She taught, studied,

worked in her laboratory and helped take care of Irene. Baby Irene was growing up. In her spare moments Marie found time to make white dresses. She knitted a muffler for her, and washed and ironed the more delicate garments. Even now she had to watch her pennies. Pierre was superb. He helped her at every turn.

Marie was ready to study every property of the queer new element. She intended to include this work in her thesis for the degree of doctor of science; as a teacher she needed this title. After five more years of research, she presented her thesis. The examining committee of professors was made up of Henri Moissan, inventor of the electric arc, Gabriel Lippmann, developer of color photography, and Bonty. Marie presented her complete work on radioactivity, as she named the effects produced by polonium, radium, uranium, and similar elements. She described radium, an element millions of times more active than uranium. Unbelievable, yet true! The professors were astounded by the mass of original information brought out by this woman. They hardly knew what to ask. Before her, these eminent scientists seemed mere schoolboys. It was unanimously admitted that this thesis was the greatest single contribution of any doctor's thesis in the history of science.

The news was made public. A strange element had been discovered by a woman. Its salts were self-luminous; they shone in the dark like tiny electric bulbs. They were continuously emitting heat in appreciable quantities. This heat given off was two hundred and fifty thousand times as much as that produced by the burning of an equal weight of coal. It was calculated that a ton of radium would boil one thousand tons of water for a whole year. This new element was the most potent poison known to mankind—even acting from a distance. A tube containing a grain the size of a pinhead and placed over the spinal column of a mouse paralyzed it in three hours; in seven hours the animal was in convulsions and in fifteen hours it was dead. Radium next to the skin produced painful sores. Pierre knew this. He had voluntarily exposed his arm to the action of this element. Besides, his fingers were sore and almost paralyzed from its effects. Becquerel had complained about it to Marie. "I love it," he had told her, "but I owe it a grudge." He had received a nasty burn on his stomach from carrying a minute amount of radium in a tube in his vest pocket when he went to London to exhibit the peculiar element to the Royal Society. Its presence sterilized seeds, healed surface cancer and killed microbes. It colored diamonds and the glass tubes in which it was kept. It electrified the air around it, and penetrated solids.

The world marveled at the news. Here was another one of nature's surprises. Chemists were bewildered. A woman had not only pushed

back the frontiers of chemical knowledge—she had discovered a new world waiting to be explored. From every laboratory on the face of the earth came inquiries about this magic stone. The imagination of the world was kindled as by no other discovery within the memory of man. Overnight the Curies became world famous.

Then began the tramp of feet to the hiding place of the Curies. The world was making a beaten path to the door of these pioneers. Tourists invaded Marie's lecture rooms. Journalists and photographers pursued them relentlessly. All sorts of stories came back of this strange couple—Pierre the reticent, dreamy, publicity-hating philosopher, and Marie the sad-faced mother who sewed and cooked and told stories to her dark little girl. Newsmongers invaded the privacy of her home and went so far as to report the conversation between Irene and her little friend, and to describe the black and white cat that lived with them. They described Mme. Curie's study; "a writing table, two rather hard armchairs, two others with straw bottoms, a couple of bookcases with glass doors through which you see volumes, papers, and vials thrown together pell mell, an iron stove in the middle of the room. Curtains, rugs, and hangings absent, letters and telegrams piled high on the table."

Marie and Pierre complained. "These are days when we scarcely have time to breathe, and to think that we dreamed of living in a world quite removed from human beings!" They wanted to be left alone, but it was of no avail. Letters, invitations, telegrams, visitors bothered and distracted them. The world clamored for the Curies. They must come out of their laboratory for a few hours at least. Lord Kelvin, England's greatest scientist, personally invited them to come to London to receive the Davy Medal of the Royal Society.

This was only the beginning of still greater honors, many of which they refused. They would rather have laboratories than decorations, was Pierre's reply, on being offered the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. Within a few months the Nobel Prize was awarded them, to be shared with the man who had started Marie on her triumphant research—Becquerel of Paris. The money from this prize was soon gone, to pay the debts incurred to keep their experiments going. They could easily have capitalized their discoveries, but they had not labored for profit. Their work was one of pure science, their sole object to serve humanity, and they refused emphatically to patent their discoveries. Almost a century before, Sir Humphrey Davy, too, had been urged to patent his newly invented miner's safety lamp, which could have brought him an annual income of ten thousand dollars. He had refused. "I have

enough," he had said, "for all my views and purposes. More wealth would not increase either my fame or my happiness."

The case of the Curies was different. Theirs was still a severe struggle. And yet they refused fabulous profits. Every crystal of radium salt which they wrenched from mountains of rock they turned over to hospitals without charge. When, in February, 1905, they succeeded in isolating a few grains of the new salt, they sent it to the Vienna Hospital in recognition of the help of the Austrian Government in providing them with the first load of pitchblende. Even that gram of radium salt, gift of American womanhood in 1921, was willed at once to the Institute of Radium of Paris for exclusive use in the Laboratoire Curie.

Marie's joy had now reached the skies. Irene was now a lovely little child of seven. Pierre had lost some of his sadness. Things were becoming a little easier for them. Then another baby daughter came—Eve Denise. Their cup of happiness was filled to the brim. But death was soon to stalk in the house of the Curies. In the afternoon of the 19th of April, 1906, a messenger knocked at the door of their home at 108 Boulevard Kellermann. One of the loveliest unions in all the history of science had come to a tragic end. A few minutes before, Pierre had been speaking to Professor Perrin at a reunion of the Faculty of Sciences. They had talked about atoms and molecules and the disintegration of matter. Pierre was on his way home. As he was crossing rue Dauphine a cab knocked him down, and as he fell, the wheels of a heavy van coming from the opposite direction passed over his head. He died instantly.

Marie listened to the story. There was no tearing of hair or wringing of hands. Not even tears. She kept repeating in a daze, "Pierre is dead, Pierre is dead." This blow almost struck her down. She mourned silently. Messages of condolence came pouring in. Rulers of nations and the most eminent scientists of the world shared her great grief. For a time it seemed she would never be able to resume her work. Within a few weeks, however, she was back in her laboratory, more silent than ever. She was to consecrate the rest of her life in the laboratory to the memory of Pierre.

Then France made a wonderful gesture. Marie was asked to occupy the chair of physics vacated by the death of her husband. This was indeed contrary to all precedent. No woman had ever held a professorship at the Sorbonne. Tradition was smashed. There was muffled whispering in the halls of the University of Paris. Men with long beards shook their gray heads against such a blunder. Some believed that whatever inspiration there had been in her work on polonium and radium was due to the fact that she had been working under the



guidance and stimulation of a profoundly imaginative man, whom, furthermore, she loved very dearly. That, they whispered behind closed doors, was the only reason for her creative work in the past. "Wait," they said, "a few years more, and Marie will have disappeared from the stage like a shadow." They dared not be heard lest they wound more deeply the broken heart of Mme. Curie. There was no open opposition. The magic word "radium" stilled the voices of those who might have cried out.

Then it was announced that Mme. Curie was to lecture in the great amphitheatre of the Sorbonne. This was to be her first lecture. Men and women from all walks of life came to Paris to hear her, members of the Academy, the faculty of science, statesmen, titled ladies and great celebrities. Lord Kelvin, Ramsay and Lodge, were among the audience. President and Mme. Fallières of France had come, and King Carlos and Queen Amelia of Portugal were also present to do honor to this woman. "On the stroke of three an insignificant little black-robed woman stepped in through a side door, and the brilliant throng rose with a thrill of homage and respect. The next moment a roar of applause burst forth. The timid little figure was visibly distressed and raised a trembling hand in mute appeal. Then you could have heard a pin drop."

She began her lecture in a low, clear, almost musical voice. There was no sign of hesitation now. She spoke French with but a slight Polish accent. There was no oratorical burst of enthusiasm; she was like a passionless spirit, the very personification of the search for scientific truth. Her audience expected to hear her extol the work of her predecessor. "When we consider," she began, "the progress made by the theories of electricity—" Her listeners were spellbound. Not a word of her great tragedy. She continued Pierre's last lecture on polonium almost at the exact point where he had left off. When she finished, there was a burst of applause that rang even in the ears of the hundreds that remained outside unable to gain admittance. None waited for the report of the historic lecture with more eagerness than her sister, Dr. Dłuska, at Zakopane in the Carpathian Mountains, and her brother, Dr. Skłodowska, in the hospital of her native Warsaw. And old Mendeléeff, dying in St. Petersburg of infected lungs, smiled again as he received the news. Andrew Carnegie, hearing of it in America, provided a fund to help her research students.

There were a few who still whispered about tradition, inspiration, women and science. They still doubted the individual greatness of Marie. She heard those faint rumors, but said nothing. She was as silent as a sarcophagus.

The element radium must be isolated—free and uncombined with any other element. That was the task she set herself. Debierne, boyhood friend of Pierre, was to aid her. Radium was a stubborn element. It was difficult to pry loose from its chloride. And there was so little of the salt to work with! Numerous methods of separation were tried unsuccessfully. Marie lived in the laboratory. She never took time for the theatre or the opera; she refused all social engagements. France hardly saw her. Finally, in 1910, Mme. Curie passed an electric current through molten radium chloride. At the negative mercury electrode she began to notice a chemical change. An amalgam was being formed. She skillfully gathered up this alloy and heated it in a silica tube filled with nitrogen under reduced pressure. The mercury boiled off as a vapor, and before her eyes lay at last the elusive radium—brilliant white globules that tarnished in the air. This was her crowning achievement. It was fitting that she who had first isolated its salts should be the first to gaze on the free element itself.

Here was a piece of brilliant work performed by Marie without Pierre beside her. The whispers were stilled forever. For this epochal work Marie became the recipient of the Nobel Prize for the second time, the only scientist ever so signally honored.

Mme. Curie was persuaded to become a candidate for membership in the Academy of Sciences of Paris, which Pierre had joined in 1905. The taboo of sex was again raised in that circle of distinguished scientists. No woman had ever been elected to that body. There was "an immutable tradition against the election of women, which it seemed eminently wise to respect." Level-headed scientists suddenly became excited. There was much heated discussion. Marie, of course, remained in the background. When, on January 23, 1911, the vote was taken, Mme. Curie failed of election by but two votes, and Professor Edouard Branley, inventor of the coherer used in the detection of wireless waves, was selected instead. France never lived down this episode of bigotry.

In the summer of 1913 Mme. Curie went to Warsaw to found a radium institute, returning to the University of Paris in the fall. Then, in 1914, while the hordes of German soldiers were advancing almost within sight of the Sorbonne, this brave woman made a secret and hurried trip to Bordeaux, with a little package safely tucked away in her handbag. While great guns roared the opening of the Battle of the Marne, and Paris taxicabs filled with light-blue uniformed men dashed madly out of the city on their way to the front, this woman fled from Paris for the South. She ran away, not for fear of German bayonets, but in dread lest the little tube she carried in her bag might fall into the hands of the enemy. When the tube of radium was safely hidden

in Bordeaux, Marie made haste to return to Paris to do her bit for the country of her adoption. Air raids did not disturb her now, nor the dangers of a ruthless invasion.

Mme. Curie planned a great undertaking. She collected all the available radiological apparatus in Paris; there was very little outside of the capital. She issued a call for young girls to be trained in the use of this wonderful new tool of medicine. One hundred and fifty girls were selected and for eight weeks she lectured and trained them to be radiological operators. Irene, now seventeen, who had refused to leave Paris under bombardment, was among the volunteers.

Mme. Curie learned to drive a car and transported instruments to be installed in the army hospitals. And while this woman, then almost fifty, loaded heavy pieces of apparatus, Irene did ambulance service near Amiens, where the old cathedral shook under incessant cannonading. Irene even went into Ypres where chlorine choked the lives out of helpless soldiers. Mother and daughter worked like Amazons.

When the invading German army had been driven back, Mme. Curie returned to Bordeaux, packed the precious tube of radium salt in her bag, and brought it again to Paris. The first year of the war saw the completion of the Radium Institute of the University of Paris. Mme. Curie was made Director. In a little room in the Institute on rue Pierre Curie, devoted to X-rays and the extraction of radium, she worked feverishly all through the war. While the slaughter of thousands went on, Marie worked heroically to save a few battered, shattered hulks. She loved freedom more than she hated war, and when the peace was signed, she declared: "A great joy came to me as a consequence of the victory obtained by the sacrifice of so many human lives. I have lived to see the reparation of more than a century of injustice that has been done to Poland." Her native land was now an independent country. Professor Ignace Moscicki, who also works with beaker and test tube in the chemical laboratory, is now President of this Republic.

In 1921 she was asked what she preferred to have most and promptly replied: "A gram of radium under my own control." This woman who had given radium to mankind owned none of the metal herself, though the world possessed one hundred and fifty grams of it. Within a few months, however, a gram of radium, gift of the women of America, was hers.

Eight years passed and again America showed its profound interest in Mme. Curie. With the radium which she received in 1921 she was also given a small annuity. This she immediately used to rent some radium for a hospital in Warsaw. While in the hospitals of New York there were fourteen grams of the salt of this curative element, in all of

Poland with its twenty-five million inhabitants there was not a gram of this substance. Mme. Curie felt this keenly but was powerless to help. Her friends invited her to come to New York to receive another gift which would enable her to give Poland a gram of radium.

Her doctors were opposed to another trans-Atlantic trip. She was anemic and weak. Her heroic sacrifices for science had played havoc with her strength. Yet she insisted on undertaking this journey, and risked her life once more. Her visit, however, was made as confidential as possible. On October 15, 1929, she arrived in New York. All red tape was cut. She was given the freedom of the port. A distinguished delegation quietly met her at the pier. She was spared the American ordeal of handshaking which had so distressed her on her previous visit.

President and Mrs. Hoover met this pale-faced woman at the front door of the White House and after an informal family dinner she was escorted to the National Academy of Sciences. Here the President of the United States presented her with a silver-encased draft for fifty thousand dollars, with which to purchase a gram of radium in Belgium. Since the discovery, in 1921, of rich radium ore deposits in upper Katanga of the Belgian Congo, Belgium had cut the price of radium in half. Otherwise she would have again received American-produced radium.

During this second visit she remained in seclusion most of the time except when she attended a few public functions. In New York she was the guest of honor at a dinner of the American Society for the Control of Cancer. In Detroit she took part in the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Edison's perfection of the incandescent electric lamp. She also attended the ceremonies in connection with the dedication of the Hepburn Hall of Chemistry of St. Lawrence University at Canton, New York, where a bas-relief of her was unveiled. Here the honorary degree of Doctor of Science was added to the other degrees which Yale, Columbia, Wellesley, Smith and the Universities of Chicago and Pennsylvania had already conferred upon her. Owen D. Young invited her to visit the Research Laboratories of the General Electric Company, through which she was conducted by Whitney, Langmuir and W. D. Coolidge—as eminent a triumvirate of scientists as ever graced a sanctum of science.

On November 8, she embarked for France to return once more to the laboratory of the Curie Institute. France could not see America outdo her in veneration for this great woman. Before she returned, the French Government voted a million and a half francs for the construction of a huge factory-laboratory for the study of radioactive elements. The plans for this unique laboratory had been outlined by Mme. Curie

and Professor Urbain, Director of the Chemical Institute of the University of Paris.

More than twenty-five years have passed since presidents and kings first came to the Sorbonne to honor this woman. Her slow, noiseless step is still heard there. And as one watches this indomitable spirit, her long supple fingers fondly handling the potent salt of her creation, one wonders which is greater, her epoch-making scientific conquests or the nobility of her self-effacing life absorbed in the adventure of science.

# The Sorrows of the Young Werther

ANDRÉ MAUROIS (1885- )

André Maurois (born Émile Herzog), with Lytton Strachey and Philip Guedalla in England and Gamaliel Bradford in America, has been a chief contributor to the new tendencies in biographical writing and one of the best reasons for the enormous contemporary popularity of the *genre*.

Born in 1885 in Elbeuf, near Rouen, in the department of Seine-Inférieure, son of a textile manufacturer, Maurois very early acquired his taste for things English, excelling at the Lycée Corneille at Rouen in the language of the people he was later to study so carefully. His marriage and his family obligations took him back to the textile mills at Elbeuf after his school years, but he was not happy there. Like the hero of his autobiographical novel *Bernard Quesnay* (1926—translated into English 1927), he longed for the literary circles of Paris and for the freedom demanded by art. The World War released him from the life of a provincial industrial manager. Through his command of English he became a liaison officer with British troops and finally was sent to British General Headquarters, where he made the most of his opportunities to study the Englishmen he met. From experiences there he later wrote *The Silences of Colonel Bramble* (1918, translated 1930), *General Bramble* (1920, translated 1922), and *The Discourses of Doctor O'Grady* (1920), a series of novels, the first of which sold more than a hundred editions. Just after the war his novel *Ni Ange ni Bête* (1919) on the English poet Shelley laid the foundation for his later biographical work. In *Ariel: The Life of Shelley* (1923, translated 1924), this novel, which had been a failure, became a tremendous commercial success when completely recast in the form which has been associated ever since with the name of Maurois. *Ariel* brings many of the devices of the novelist into biography, especially the direct, dramatic presentation of scenes, wherever possible. This "*biographie romancée*" was followed by *Disraeli* (1927). Amidst the acclaim which greeted these works were mingled discordant voices of critics who questioned the authenticity of the method and the treatment of sources. Biography, after all, they said, cannot pass beyond certain boundaries; it is history, not fiction. But Maurois came to the defence of his methods in *Aspects of Biography* (1929), based on lectures given at Cambridge University, and met his critics half way in *Byron* (1930), where, without sacrificing narrative vigor, he makes more use of his subject's writings and buttresses his tale by continual citation of sources. The critics of Maurois have been disarmed, for the most part, and general readers have really

been little disturbed by the "battle of the books" which raged about Maurois for a time. Obviously the "*biographie romancée*" has many dangers. It has led to shoddy and dishonest work by imitators of Maurois, but the one real master of the method in our time has held to high standards not only of art but of scholarship.

Byron was followed by *Lyautey* (1931), *The Edwardian Era* (1933), and *Chateaubriand* (1938). Shorter biographies appeared in *Mape: The World of Illusion* (1926), *Dickens* (1927), and *Voltaire* (1935). Maurois has also published novels (*Atmosphere of Love*, 1929, and others), history (*The Miracle of England*, 1937), essays (*A Private Universe*, 1932, and *The Art of Living*, 1940), criticism (*Prophets and Poets*, 1935), and, more recently, several books on the second World War (*The Battle of France* and *Tragedy in France*, both in 1940). He has lectured very widely in France, England, and America; in 1927 he was heard in lectures at Princeton, Yale, and other Eastern universities. At Princeton he is said to have gathered material for a biography of Woodrow Wilson. Since 1939 Maurois has been a member of the Académie Française; France has no higher honor to bestow upon a man of letters.

Maurois has always brought to biography the sense of form and the dramatic gifts of a fine novelist. The biographer, he has said, "must not invent anything, but his art is to forget. If he has at his disposal two hundred letters and a long diary, he must know how to extract the few sentences that will convey the genuine impression." We note here the same insistence upon selection, interpretation, and form as in Lytton Strachey's comments on his art. But in the work of Maurois there is often a much closer approximation to fictional methods than anywhere in Strachey's. The reader who wishes to read for himself Maurois's artistic *apologia* should turn to his *Aspects of Biography*.

"The Sorrows of the Young Werther" is an excellent example of "*biographie romancée*." Note, for example, the careful structure of the action, the vivid use of setting, the novelist's device of "omniscience," which enables the author to look into the minds of the characters, the use of dialogue, and the dramatic method by which scenes and characters move before the reader, re-created by the imagination. Though the method is that of *fiction*, Maurois has adhered very closely to verifiable fact in the groundwork of his tale.

#### STRASBOURG

*He is said to have been so given over to Love that, as soon as he met a woman he liked, he tried to win her favours. If he failed, he painted her portrait, and thus extinguished his desire.*—LIFE OF  
FRA FILIPPO LIPPI.

THE FRANKFURT COACH stopped at the Geist; a German student set down his luggage, astonished the inn-keeper by refusing dinner, and

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rushed wildly off to the Cathedral. The vergers, as they watched him climb the tower, looked at each other with some misgiving.

The gabled roofs surged in waves against the hard, pure lines of the Castle of the Rohans. The plains of Alsace sparkled under the midday sun, dotted with villages, forests, and vineyards. At this very hour, in every one of those villages, girls and women would be dreaming. As he looked at this virgin canvas on which his desire had begun to sketch out so many and so various delights, he felt all the vague delightful charm of amorous expectancy. He came again many times. The platform at the top overhung the adjacent parts of the building so that he could imagine himself surrounded by the open sky. At first he felt giddy. Long illnesses in his childhood had left him morbidly sensitive and afraid of empty space, noise, and the dark. But he wanted to cure himself of these weaknesses.

Gradually the vast plain, a chart upon which his heart had written nothing, became enriched with names and recollections. Alsace had become "my beloved Alsace." He could now distinguish Saverne, where Weyland had taken him; Drusenheim, whence a lovely meadow path leads to Sesenheim. There in a rustic parsonage, surrounded by gardens and embowered in jasmine, lived the charming Frédérique Brion. In the far distance, beyond the hills and castle towers, dark clouds were gathering. The student's thoughts turned to the little moving human figures who were hurrying about the narrow streets three hundred feet below. How much he would have liked to enter into those lives, remote as they seemed from one another and yet united by all manner of mysterious bonds; to lift up the roofs of the houses, to be present unseen at all those secret and surprising actions through which alone we can understand our fellows. On the previous evening, at the Marionette Theatre, he had seen a performance of the legend of Doctor Faust.

As he looked up and watched the clouds sail past the spire he felt as though it had suddenly taken flight and was carrying him away. "Supposing the Devil offered me power, possessions, women in return for the bond of Faust; should I sign?" After a short but honest examination of his conscience, he said to himself, "I would not sign it to be master of the world; but for knowledge—yes. Ah, you are too inquisitive, my fine friend."

Rain began to fall and he made his way down the narrow twisting stairway. "One might write a *Faust*. There are a good many already. . . . But Spiess, and poor old Widmann—that is second-rate stuff. Their Faust is a vulgar rascal who is damned by his own baseness. The devil was cheated: he would have got him anyhow. . . . Mine? Mine



would be a greater character—a kind of Prometheus. Defeated by the gods if you like, but at least because he tried to snatch their secret from them.”

Below, in the Cathedral, a dark velvety light poured through the stained windows. A few kneeling women were praying in the gloom. The organs were murmuring vaguely as though under the touch of gentle fingers. Goethe looked long at the vaulting of the roof. When he saw a beautiful tree, he often had the sensation of losing himself in its growth and penetrating its perfect scheme. His thought rose like sap, spread into the branches, and expanded into leaves, flowers, and fruits. The immense converging arches of the nave recalled the same manifold and splendid design.

“Here, as in the works of Nature, everything has its purpose, everything is proportioned to the whole. . . . Oh, to write books that should be like cathedrals! If only you could express what you feel! If you could only put on to paper the fire that runs through your veins! . . .”

As soon as he withdrew into himself like this he came upon a whole world of his own. He had just discovered Shakespeare, and he admired him as a man does who takes the measure of a rival. Why not be the German Shakespeare? He had the power; he knew it. But how could he lay hold on it? What form should he impose upon this living force? He longed to see his emotion, a prisoner at last, rigid like those mighty vaultings. Perhaps the architect himself had once hesitated and despaired in the presence of the dream-cathedrals that had preceded the Cathedral.

There were plenty of subjects. The story of Sir Götz . . . Faust . . . idylls of the German countryside, in the manner of a modern Theocritus. A Mahomet perhaps, or a Prometheus. Any hero would do through whom he could fling a challenge to the world. He would model his heroes from himself, but on gigantic scale, and then breathe his own life into them. A Caesar perhaps? His span of life would not be long enough for so many projects. “A bird-like nature full of vain excitement,” his master Herder had said of him. But to fill these wonderful empty frames he needed ideas and feelings; he had to live and live a thousand lives. “Not the being,” he said to himself again and again, “but the becoming everything.”

“Being nothing? Not even the husband of the charming Frédérique? No, not even that.” He pictured to himself Frédérique’s grief. Had he really the right to leave her, when his entire behaviour had let her be-

lieve that he would marry her, when Pastor Brion had welcomed him as a son? "The right? Are there any rights in love? After all, the adventure was as pleasant for her as for me. Had not Frédérique understood all along that the son of Councillor Goethe of Frankfurt would not marry a pretty country girl? Would my father ever have consented? Would she have been happy in a world so different from her own?"

"Sophisms! If you must be false, at least be frank. The son of Councillor Goethe is of no greater importance than the daughter of the Pastor. My mother was poorer than Frédérique. And as for the world so different from her own, was she not delightful this winter when she danced on the waxed floors of the great drawing-rooms of Strasbourg?"

"You are right, but what am I to do? I cannot . . . no, I cannot . . . I should be in bondage if I did. The first duty is to develop all that one has, all that one can become. I shall always be Goethe. When I use my name I mean all it stands for. My qualities and my faults—all are good, all are part of my nature. I was right to love Frédérique because I felt so at the time. If one day I feel I must go away from her to recover myself, I shall still be Goethe when I go and all will be as it should."

At this moment he imagined Frédérique in tears by the roadside and himself riding away, his head bent, not daring to look back. "What a scene for a *Faust*," he thought.

## II

A parchment with a red seal turned the student into a lawyer. The deserted Frédérique wept, Doctor Goethe's horse trotted towards Frankfurt. Skating and philosophy proved effectual remedies against some tolerably sharp attacks of remorse. In the spring a course at the Imperial Chamber at Wetzlar seemed to Councillor Goethe an indispensable adjunct to his son's legal studies.

For a century the Holy Empire had been sinking into the sands of oblivion, and only three mutilated arches of the vast edifice which had for so long sheltered the land of Germany could still be observed: the Aulic Council at Vienna, the Diet at Ratisbon, and the Imperial Chamber at Wetzlar. This latter, the supreme tribunal for all the kings, dukes, archdukes, palatines, bishops and margraves who had divided the authority of the Emperor between them, should have been maintained by contributions from the various States; but, as often happens in the case of collective institutions, each of the participants, in order to make sure that he should not be the only one to pay, had fallen into the habit

of paying nothing. The customary financial expedients were under discussion: some proposed a special stamp, others a lottery or a tax upon the Jews. In the meantime, as some means of subsistence had to be found, the judges obtained their salaries from the litigants.

The principal sovereigns of Germany maintained legations in attendance on this grandiose and sordid shadow of a great judicial institution, and thus created an agreeable and leisured little circle in this provincial town. When Goethe arrived at the Kronprinz Inn he found a noisy table of young *attachés* and secretaries. He was at once invited to join it, and from the moment of his first conversation realized that he was in familiar spiritual surroundings.

Europe was going through one of its crises of intellectual unrest. For nine years its kings had lived in peace; within their States worn-out constitutions had managed to preserve enough vigour to make revolutions seem impossible. The contrast between the ardour of youth and the stagnation of society gave birth to a feeling of impatience and disgust, a melancholy peculiar to periods of transition and peace, which was then called, as it always will be, the malady of the age. The young *attachés* at Wetzlar were afflicted like all their contemporaries. They were great readers: they sought for emotional inspiration in Rousseau and Herder; and when in doubt, and while they were waiting to find it, they drank a great deal of wine.

They were delighted with Doctor Goethe, who was one of their own kind and yet their superior. He, like them, repeated at the turn of each phrase: "Nature . . . respect Nature . . . live in Nature." For Nature was the key-word of that time, as Reason had been for the preceding generation, and as Liberty, then Sincerity, then Violence and then Justice were later to become. But for Goethe Nature was much more than a word. He lived in her, became part of her and accepted her with a kind of gay abandonment. While his new friends, diplomats and literary amateurs, shut themselves up in their offices in order at least to make a pretence of work, Goethe, boldly displaying his contempt of the Imperial Court and his own determination to learn public law out of Homer and Pindar only, set out every morning with a book under his arm into the lovely country that surrounded Wetzlar. The spring was exquisite. The trees in the fields and meadows looked like great white and pink bouquets. Lying among the tall grasses, near the bank of a stream, Goethe lost himself in the contemplation of all the myriad little plants and insects, and the blue sky. After the tortures of Strasbourg, the doubts and the remorse of Frankfurt, came a strange serenity, and an amazing activity of mind.

He opened his Homer, and the modern, human aspect of the story

delighted him. Those young girls at the fountain were Nausicaa and her companions. The green peas and roast meat which a woman was preparing in yonder great inn kitchen was the banquet of the suitors and the kitchen of Penelope. Men do not change; heroes are not statues of white marble; their skin is hairy and cracked, their hands swollen and restless. Like the divine Ulysses we sail upon the open sea, in a little vessel suspended above an abyss, and in the hands of the mighty Gods. A fearful yet a beautiful thought when one is lying on one's back among soft grasses, gazing at the vault of heaven.

In the evening, at the Kronprinz Inn, the great delight now of the Round Table was to listen to Doctor Goethe relating his discoveries of the day. A verse of Pindar, or a rustic church that he had drawn as well as he could; some lovely lime trees in a village square, children, or a beautiful farm girl. He had the gift of charging his stories with an almost naïve enthusiasm which made the most trifling things interesting. As soon as he came in, the movement of life seemed to grow quicker. Among the young men who listened to him, some had talent, but none had genius. "Ah, Goethe," said one of them to him, "how can one help loving you?"

All Wetzlar soon sought his acquaintance. Two of the secretaries, although unmarried, lived on the outskirts of the Round Table. One of them, young Jerusalem, of the Brunswick Legation, was a very handsome youth with soft, melancholy blue eyes. He kept himself at a distance, people said, because of an unhappy passion for the wife of one of his colleagues. He came once or twice to see Goethe, who was interested in his pessimism. But Jerusalem was too reserved to allow of the establishment of a real friendship.

The other hermit was Kestner of the Hanover Legation. When his comrades spoke of him they always called him the "*Fiancé*." He was, in fact, understood to be engaged to a girl in the town. He was extremely serious-minded, and his chief, who had a great respect for him, left him, in spite of his youth, a great deal of responsibility. It was for this reason that he had not time to come and dine at the Kronprinz. At the outset, the praises which the choicer spirits bestowed on the new arrival had put Kestner against him. But one day, when he was taking a walk in the country with a friend, they came upon Goethe under the trees. The conversation at once became deep and earnest, and after two or three meetings, Kestner, too, made up his mind, with the solemn deliberation that was characteristic of him, that he had undoubtedly met a very remarkable man.

Admired by his circle, free from all worldly or academic restraint, enraptured by the beauty of that springtime, Goethe was completely

happy. Sometimes a transitory feeling clouded his enthusiasm as a light ripple stirs the calm surface of a lake. . . . Frédérique? No, it was not her recollection that passed across the steady glow of his thought. Once more it was like an uneasy expectation. He looked down upon Wetzlar as in days gone by he had looked down upon Alsace from the Cathedral.

"Shall I one day feel a delightful shiver as I open one of those doors? . . . Shall I be unable to read a stanza without my thoughts flying to a beloved face? . . . When I leave a lady, in the evening by moonlight, shall I already find the night too long and the morning too far off? Yes, all this is coming; I feel it. . . . And yet, Frédérique . . ."

He noted down a recollection. "When I was a little boy I happened to plant a cherry tree, and I loved to watch it grow. The spring frosts destroyed the buds and I had to wait another year before I could see ripe cherries on my tree. Then the birds ate them, then the caterpillars, and then a greedy neighbour. . . . And yet if I ever have another garden I shall plant another cherry tree."

Thus Doctor Goethe took his walks beneath the blossoming trees, afire with his new passion. He knew all about it, except the name of his beloved.

### III

When the fine weather came the young men of the Legations used to organize dances in the country. A village inn was appointed as a rendezvous. Some came on horseback, others brought their partners from Wetzlar in carriages. When Goethe was invited for the first time to one of these little *fêtes* it was agreed that he should go with two of the girls to fetch Fräulein Charlotte Buff, whom everyone called Lotte.

She was the daughter of old Herr Buff, the steward of the Teutonic Order, and she lived in the house of the Order, a pleasant white mansion. Goethe got out of the carriage, crossed quite an imposing courtyard, and, as he saw no one, went into the house.

A young girl was standing in the middle of a group of children to whom she was handing out bread-and-butter. She was a blonde with blue eyes and a slightly turned-up nose; her features were not regular and a severe critic might perhaps have thought her scarcely pretty. But she busied herself with the children with so much charm and simplicity, she seemed so joyous, so unaffected, the whole scene was so happy a picture of one of those Germanic idylls that haunted Goethe's mind, that he was delighted with it.

A man pursues all his life among the race of women the type which, for some mysterious reason, is the only one that can arouse his feelings. In Goethe's eyes the bread-and-butter and the children formed part of

this typical picture. It was a rustic grace, a delicate touch in homely matters that moved him. Frédérique of Strasbourg had already figured as a Muse of the countryside. Nausicaa, a king's daughter washing her linen, had perhaps given birth, in his mind, to this race of pure and homely maidens. In any case Charlotte Buff's slices of bread-and-butter seemed to him a perfect theme for a domestic symphony.

The girl's conversation during the journey, her childlike pleasure, the good-humoured determination which she showed in amusing her friends with little games during a storm, finished her conquest of the Doctor. In the completeness of his delight he realized beyond all question that he had found the woman with whom he had been in love for a fortnight.

Lotte herself was also well aware that she had found favour. It must be admitted that she was pleased. Goethe was handsome and agreeable; for a month past all Lotte's friends had talked of nothing but this marvellous intellect. She was a coquette, and a dangerous one, as only virtuous women can be.

Later in the evening Kestner, who had been, as he always was, kept later than the others by his work (he was a meticulous person—he made a rough copy of every letter and never sent off the despatches to Hanover without having read everything before signing it), rode out to join the little party, and from his attitude and that of the young girl, Goethe understood that Lotte Buff was the famous *fiancée*. This discovery took him aback, but he controlled himself, and without any sign of discomposure went on dancing, and amusing and entertaining the company. They did not break up till dawn. Goethe escorted his three companions back through the misty woods and the fields refreshed by the storm. Charlotte and he were the only ones who did not fall asleep.

"Please, please," said she, "do not trouble about me."

"As long as I see those eyes of yours still open," he answered, looking at her, "I cannot shut mine."

From that moment they did not speak another word.

When Goethe moved he lightly brushed the young girl's warm knees, and this imperceptible contact gave him one of the keenest pleasures he had ever known. The beauty of the morning light, the slightly ludicrous slumbers of their companions, the astonishing happiness that they shared made them feel like confederates in some delightful plot.

"I am in love with her," thought Goethe. "I am sure of that. But how is it possible? At this moment at Sesenheim . . . Ah, well . . . one love fades and another blooms. This is Nature's way. . . . But she is engaged to Kestner, to the good and loyal Kestner. What can I hope for?"

Need I hope? It will be enough to see her, watch her living among the children, in her house, talk to her and listen to her laughter. What will come of all this? Who knows, and why try to foresee the end of anything? One should live like a running brook."

When the carriage at last stopped at the Teutonic House, which was still sleeping in the grey morning light, he felt quite dazed with happiness.

#### IV

On the following day he came to ask after Nausicaa and made the acquaintance of Alcinoüs. Old Herr Buff had lost his wife a year before; he had eleven children over whom Lotte reigned with benevolent despotism. Goethe, at his very first visit, as might have been expected, immediately won the hearts of the old gentleman and his children. He told some excellent stories and invented some new games. In everything that he said or did there was something youthful and captivating that was quite irresistible.

When he took his departure all the little company begged him to come back soon. A smile from Lotte confirmed the children's invitation. Goethe reappeared on the following day. He had no business to keep him away; he found no happiness except in Lotte's company, and he was not the man to deny himself a happiness that was within his reach. He came in the morning and in the evening, and in a few days he was an established visitor to the house.

Charlotte's life was indeed delightful to watch. Goethe found once more in her what he had so much loved in Frédérique: an activity practical in its purpose but poetic, too, from a certain delicate ease in the performance. She worked from morning till night. She washed the small children, dressed them, played with them, while at the same time superintending the studies of the older ones with a great deal of good sense and modesty. She took Goethe out to pick fruit in the orchard and occupied him in shelling peas or stringing beans. When it grew dark the whole family assembled in the drawing-room and at the request of Charlotte, who did not like leaving a friend without useful employment, Goethe tuned the harpsichord. Lotte was not sentimental. She was sensitive, but she was too much occupied to have the leisure or the wish to make play with her feelings. Her conversations with Goethe were instructive and serious. He talked about his life, his religious beliefs, and sometimes, too, about Homer and Shakespeare. She was intelligent enough to appreciate the rare qualities of the companion who was becoming a part of her daily life. She was conscious of emotion and perhaps love in all he said, and she was pleased without being dis-

turbed. She knew that her own heart was untouched and that she remained Kestner's faithful and immaculate *fiancée*.

On his part the *Fiancé* was a little melancholy. His devotion to his diplomatic duties kept him away from her nearly all day. When he reached Lotte's house he saw Goethe sitting on the terrace at the girl's feet, holding a skein of wool, or found them in a corner of the garden choosing flowers for a bouquet. They welcomed him warmly and at once carried on with him the conversation that they had begun, so that his arrival never gave rise to an embarrassed silence. Nevertheless Kestner guessed that Goethe was not very pleased to see him. He would himself have sooner been alone with Charlotte, and Goethe, on the strength of his standing invitation, was in no hurry to take his leave. As they were both men of education and breeding, they did not in any way betray these somewhat painful feelings, but both of them were on their guard. Kestner was all the more alarmed because he was extremely modest. He greatly admired his rival; he thought him handsome and clever. What was worse, Goethe was unoccupied, and one who is always at hand to unburden the restless and unsatisfied souls of those eternal hermits of the home gains great power over them.

The *Fiancé* would have been more reassured if he had been able to read the more intimate thoughts of his rival. From the very first day the latter had understood that Lotte would not fall in love with him. A woman of her character does not give up a Kestner for a Goethe. He was sure she liked him, and that was a good deal. Besides, what could he have asked for? To marry her? That would certainly ensure his happiness. But that was a happiness that did not tempt him. No, he was satisfied as he was. To sit at Charlotte's feet, watch her play with her young brothers, wait for a smile when he had done her a service or said something that she liked, receive a little tap, light as a caress, when he had ventured too direct a compliment—in this monotonous and narrow life he found an infinite contentment.

The spring was warm and they passed the days in the garden. All the incidents of this tranquil, pure affection figured in Goethe's journal like little scenes out of an idyll. He began to create. Not indeed his mighty edifice, not the Cathedral, but charming little Greek temples in a lovely countryside. What was to come of all this? He would not think about it. He began to accept his actions more and more as natural phenomena.

The evenings grew ever more delightful. When Kestner arrived the three friends went and sat together on the terrace and talked very late into the night. Sometimes they went for a walk by moonlight in the meadows and orchards. They had achieved that quality of perfect confi-



dence which gives so much charm to conversation. No subject seemed absurd, and they had for one another that affection and mutual regard which alone make possible a true simplicity of intercourse.

For the most part it was Goethe who talked; Kestner and Lotte delighted in the amazing brilliance of his intellect. He described his Frankfurt friends, Fräulein von Klettenberg, Doctor Merck, strange creature of evil eye and insinuating talk, who looked for cures in books on mysticism. He told them how he had read the alchemists in his company and populated the universe with sylphs, Undines, and salamanders. For a long while he had been devoted to the pietists. They seemed to him more sensitive than others to personal religion, less attached to empty practices. Then he had grown tired of them. "They are people of commonplace intelligence who imagine there is nothing outside religion because they are ignorant of all the rest. They are intolerant; they want to mould other people's noses to the shape of their own."

Goethe himself believed that the truth could not lie in the idea of a God external to man. "It must be so very inconvenient to believe in the perpetual presence of God at one's side. I think I should feel as if I had the Great Elector always at my elbow. I believe in the presence of God within me."

Religion, next to love, is women's favourite topic. Lotte followed their conversation with the liveliest interest.

After having escorted their friend home, Goethe and Kestner would often go on wandering about for a long while in the deserted streets of Wetzlar. The edges of the shadows were sharply cut by the moonlight. About two in the morning, Goethe would sit on the top of a wall and declaim the wildest poetry. Sometimes they heard a noise of footsteps, and after a moment saw young Jerusalem pass by, walking by himself with measured steps and bent head.

"Ah," said Goethe, "the Lover!"

And he burst out laughing.

v

Spring gave way to summer and affection to desire. Lotte was too kind and Goethe too young. Sometimes as they were walking along the narrow paths of the garden their bodies brushed against each other for one instant; sometimes as they were disentangling a skein of wool or picking a flower their hands met. The recollection of such moments kept Goethe awake for entire nights. He found it very difficult to wait for the morning, when he could see Charlotte once more. He recaptured even to their slightest shades the powerful and exquisite emotions

that he had experienced with *Frédérique*, and this return of the seasons in his heart put him out of humour.

"When love comes back it destroys its own quality, which is the expression of the Eternal, the Infinite." Since this, too, was to repeat itself, human life was a mortally monotonous performance.

With the heavy August days, which cut short their little common tasks and left him long hours to spend at Charlotte's feet, Goethe became more enterprising. One day he kissed her. Unimpeachable *fiancée* as she was, she told Kestner.

It was a difficult position for the grave and tender secretary. An unguarded remark, a reflection on the unconscious coquetry of Lotte and all would have been lost. But Kestner, no doubt because he was deeply in love with her, had the secret of a gift which, in a lover, is called delicacy. He contented himself by assuring Charlotte of his confidence in her and, as she asked him to do, left it to her to bring Goethe back to the ways of propriety. In the evening she asked the Doctor to stay after Kestner had gone, and told him that he must not make any mistake about her feelings: that she was and always had been in love with her betrothed and that she would never fall in love with any other man. Kestner watched Goethe come up with him, his head bent and looking rather sad, and he at once felt incomparably happy, kind, and sympathetic.

The three friends then became united in an odd and charming conspiracy. Following the example of Goethe, who concealed nothing, Kestner and Charlotte fell into the habit of revealing their feelings with the greatest freedom. Of an evening on the terrace Goethe's love for Lotte was the subject of long and delightful conversations. They talked of it as of a natural phenomenon, at once dangerous and interesting. Goethe's birthday was the same as Kestner's. They exchanged presents. Kestner's to Goethe was a little pocket Homer; Lotte's was the pink ribbon she had worn in her bosom on the day of their first meeting. Kestner had thought of sacrificing himself. He did not tell the others, but he noted down his misgivings in his private diary. Goethe was younger, handsomer, and more brilliant than he was. Perhaps he would make Lotte happier. But Lotte herself had reassured him: she had said she liked him best, and that Goethe with all his striking qualities was hardly made for a husband. And then no doubt Kestner's courage would have failed him, for he was deeply smitten.

Goethe, himself, under a gay and natural exterior, was suffering. Lotte's firm decision and her quite definite choice wounded his self-respect. The continual temptation of their life in common increased his desires. He had attacks of violent passion during which, in the presence

of the indulgent and sympathetic Kestner, he seized Charlotte's hands and wept and he kissed them.

But in the worst moments of despair he knew that underneath this layer of genuine sadness there lay dormant a deep serenity in which he could one day find refuge. Just as a man out in a storm knows that the sun is bright above the clouds and possesses some means of reaching that untroubled space, so Goethe in his torment knew that he would soon escape his sorrow and would perhaps find something like a bitter and gloomy pleasure in describing it.

The evenings became shorter and cooler. The September roses began to fall. Goethe's satanic friend, the brilliant Merck, came to Wetzlar; he met Charlotte and found her charming, but he did not tell Goethe so. With a grimace of indifference he counselled flight to other loves. The Doctor, somewhat out of humour, thought that the time had come to tear himself away from a vain delight that was nearing its exhaustion. The man still found the same pleasure in living in Charlotte's shadow, in feeling the rustle of her dress against him in the darkness, in winning from her infinitesimal and precious proofs of her affection, snatched from the silent watchfulness of Kestner; the artist was satiated with these monotonous emotions. He had increased his spiritual resources by his stay in the place; he had made a collection of beautiful landscapes saturated in romance; the vein was worked out, the harvest gathered, and he must go.

"Must I really go? My soul is turning like the weather-vane on the top of a steeple. The world is so beautiful, and he is fortunate who can take pleasure in it without thinking overmuch. I am often annoyed because I cannot do this, and preach myself sermons on the art of enjoying the present."

But the world was calling him, the world with its infinite promises. "Not to be anything, but to become everything," that must be his aim. He had his work to do, his cathedral to build. What would it be like? That was still a mystery, hidden in the mists of the future. Yet it was to this dim prospect that he was going to sacrifice joys that would be secure. He forced himself to settle the day of his departure, and thenceforward, sure in his determination, he could plunge into the pleasing frenzy of his passion.

He had arranged to meet his friends in the garden after dinner, and he was waiting for them under the chestnut trees on the terrace. They would come, full of friendliness and gaiety; they would treat this evening just like any other. But this was the last evening. The Master of Events, Doctor Goethe, had decided it; nothing could alter his decree.

Departure was painful, but it was not unpleasant to find oneself so inflexible.

He had inherited from his mother such a lively horror of scenes that he could not endure the idea of formal farewells. He wanted to pass this last evening with his friends in a serene and sad enjoyment. He felt in advance the pathos of this conversation, in which two of the participants, in their ignorance of the true position, were unconsciously to wound the third, who, because he alone was aware of it, would be the only one to be hurt.

He had indulged himself for some time with the agreeable torment of these reflections when he heard the footsteps of Charlotte and Kestner on the sandy path. He ran to meet them and rapturously kissed Lotte's hand. They walked to a dark leafy arbour at the end of the avenue and sat down. The garden was so lovely under the pale moonlight that they stayed a long while in silence. Then Charlotte said:

"I never walk in the moonlight without thinking of death. . . . I believe we shall be born again. . . . But shall we meet again, Goethe? . . . Shall we recognize each other? . . . What do you think? . . ."

"What are you saying, Charlotte?" he asked, completely overcome. "We shall meet again. In this life or the next we shall meet again."

"Do the friends that we have lost," she went on, "know anything about us? Do they feel all that is in our minds when we think of them? The image of my mother is always before my eyes when I am sitting quietly in the evening among her children, among our children, when they cluster round as they did round her."

She talked thus for a long time in a voice as soft and tender as the night itself. Goethe wondered if this unwonted melancholy were due to some strange presentiment. For himself, he felt his eyes fill with tears, and the emotion that he had wished to avoid was gaining possession of him. In spite of Kestner's presence, he took Charlotte's hand. It was the last day. What did it matter?

"We must go in," she said gently: "it is time."

She attempted to withdraw her hand, but he held it forcibly.

"Let us agree," said Kestner gaily, "let us agree that the first of us who dies shall give the two survivors some information about the other world."

"We shall meet again," said Goethe: "under whatever form it may be, we shall meet again. Good-bye, Charlotte. Good-bye, Kestner; we shall see each other again."

"Tomorrow, I think," said she, smiling. She got up and went with her *fiancé* towards the house. Goethe saw her white dress still gleaming

for a few seconds in the shadow of the lime trees, and then everything disappeared.

After Kestner had gone, the Doctor wandered alone for a while in the lane from which the front of the house was visible. He saw a window lit up: it was Lotte's room. A little later the window grew dark. Charlotte slept. She knew nothing. The novelist was satisfied.

The next day when Kestner came home he found a letter from Goethe.

"He is gone, Kestner. When you receive this letter, he will have gone. Give Lotte the enclosed note. I had made up my mind, but your conversation yesterday has shattered me. I cannot say anything at the moment. If I had stayed with you an instant longer I could not have held out. Now I am alone and tomorrow I go. Oh, my poor head!

"Lotte, I hope I shall indeed come back, but God knows when. Lotte, what were the feelings of my heart when you were talking, knowing that I was seeing you for the last time? . . . He is gone. What spirit made you choose such a subject? . . . I am now alone and I can weep. I shall see you again, but 'tomorrow' never comes. Tell my young ruffians he has gone. . . . I cannot go on."

Kestner took the letter to Lotte early in the afternoon. All the children of the house echoed sadly, "Doctor Goethe has gone."

Lotte was sad, and while she was reading the letter the tears came into her eyes. "It was better for him to go," she said.

Kestner and she could talk of nothing else. Visitors came; they were amazed at Goethe's precipitate departure and found fault with his want of courtesies. Kestner defended him with much warmth.

## VI

While his friends, much affected, read and re-read his letters, pitied him and pictured to themselves with feelings of anxious sympathy what his solitude would be like, Goethe was walking quickly down the lovely valley of the Lahn. He was going to Coblenz, where Merck was to meet him at the house of Frau de la Roche.

In the distance a hazy chain of mountains, above him the white summits of the rocks, at his feet, in the depths of a gloomy gorge, a river flowing under a curved roof of willows—all this composed a pleasantly melancholy landscape.

The pride of having broken the enchantment of Wetzlar tempered the melancholy of his still lively recollection. At times when he thought over the adventure he had just lived through, he said to himself, "Could not an elegy be made out of it? . . . or perhaps an idyll?" Or again

he would ask himself if he were not better fitted to draw and paint landscapes like the one he was then passing through. "Come," said he, "I will throw my fine pocketknife into the river. If I see it fall into the water, I will become a painter; if the willows hide it from my sight as it drops, I will give up the idea for ever."

He did not see the knife plunge into the stream, but caught sight of the splash, and the oracle seemed ambiguous. He postponed his decision. He walked as far as Ems, then went down the Rhine in a boat and arrived at Frau de la Roche's house. He received the most delightful welcome. Councillor de la Roche was a man of the world, a great reader of Voltaire, a sceptic and a cynic. His wife was accordingly a woman of feeling. She had published a novel, she was interested in literary men and had turned her house, in spite of her husband and perhaps in protest, into a meeting-place for the Apostles of the Heart.

Goethe was more particularly interested in the dark eyes of Maximiliane de la Roche, a beautiful girl of sixteen, intelligent and precocious. He took long walks with her in the country, talked about God and the Devil, Nature and the Heart, Rousseau and Goldsmith, and indeed spread himself superbly just as if Lotte had never existed. And the recollection of Lotte even gave a zest to this new friendship. "It is a very pleasant sensation," he noted, "to listen to the first accents of a dawning affection murmuring in one's heart before the echo of the last sigh of an extinct affection is altogether lost in the void. Thus when we turn our eyes from the setting sun we like to see the moon rising on the opposite horizon."

But he had soon to return to Frankfurt.

A return to the paternal house, after a reverse, brings a double feeling of relief and of discouragement. The bird has tried to fly away but has had to fold his wings once more. While he keeps to the nest he pines for the free air for which his wings had not proved strong enough. The child escapes from the difficulties of a hard and hostile world; he is absorbed once more in the familiar round, which is naturally less opposed than any other to the habits he has formed. There he discovers again the monotony of sensations grown too familiar, the affectionate slavery of the family.

His travels have been teaching him a sense of proportion, and he is surprised to find his own people still engaged upon their old foolish disputes. Goethe once more heard at home the very phrases that had so exasperated his childhood. His sister Cornelia complained of her father, his mother complained of Cornelia, and Councillor Goethe, whose temper was not accommodating, wished to send back to the study of

lawyers' files a son whose head was full of half-created characters and who had no notion of the world of reality.

Goethe had a positive dread of melancholy, and realizing that it was mastering him, decided that his only chance of salvation lay in at once undertaking an important literary work. He was still thinking of a Faust, perhaps of a Prometheus, and perhaps, too, of a Caesar. But after having sketched out several plans, written a few verses, crossed them out and torn them up, he recognized that he was doing no good. Between them and his work came the image of Lotte.

His lips retained the savour of the only kiss that he had ever had from her, his hands the touch of her firm soft hand, and his ears the sound of that vivid, lively voice of hers. Now that he was far away from her, he found out that she was everything to him. As soon as he sat down at the table his mind went off into sad and fruitless reveries. He tried, as one always does, to reconstruct the past as he would like it to have been. If Lotte had not been engaged. . . . If Kestner had been less estimable and less kind. . . . If he himself had been less conscientious. . . . If he had had the courage to stay . . . or the courage to disappear altogether and force his mind to destroy the images that tormented him. He had hung above his bed a silhouette of Lotte cut in black paper by a gipsy artist, and he looked at this picture with a sort of frenzied devotion. Every evening before he went to bed he kissed it and said, "Good-night, Lotte." When he wanted a pin he took one of those that fastened the portrait to the wall and said, "Lotte, will you let me take one of your pins?" As evening fell he would often sit down and carry on long conversations in an undertone with his lost friend. These acts, which were natural and spontaneous on the first occasion, had in a few days become empty and melancholy rites, but he found in their accomplishment a certain relief to his distress of mind. He looked upon the commonplace, even absurd silhouette as a kind of altar.

He wrote to Kestner nearly every day and gave him affectionate messages for Charlotte. When speaking of his love he still kept up the half-jesting, half-tragic tone that he had assumed at Wetzlar, because it was the only one that made it possible for him to express the feelings that troubled him without offending Kestner.

"We have spoken," he wrote, "of what may possibly take place beyond the clouds. I do not know; but what I do know is that the Lord our God must be a very cold-blooded person to leave you Lotte."

Another time: "So Lotte has not dreamed about me? I take this very ill, and I insist on her dreaming about me this very night and telling you nothing about it."

Sometimes he gave way to spitefulness and pride. "I shall not write again until I can tell Lotte that I am loved, and deeply loved, by another."

After a few attempts he was forced to realize that it would be impossible for him to get to work again on the subjects that had interested him in the past until he had rid his mind of this obsession. The only task of which he felt capable was to write about Lotte, to write a work of which Lotte should be the heroine.

But though he had considerable material—his diary, his recollections, even his feelings, which were still vivid—he was faced with great difficulties. The subject was very thin: a young man arrives in a town, he falls in love with a woman who is not free and draws back before the difficulties of the situation. Would this make a book? And why did the hero go away? His female readers would not like this at all. If he had been truly in love he would have stayed. In the adventure as it really happened Goethe had gone away because the call of his art, the will to create, had been stronger than his love. The more he thought about it the more commonplace and inadequate the subject seemed, the more incapable he felt of working it out, the more his weariness and disgust with all literary labours increased.

In the middle of November Kestner made known to him a surprising piece of news. Young Jerusalem, the handsome, melancholy youth who took so many walks in the moonlight wearing a blue frock-coat and yellow waistcoat, and who had been called in jest "The Lover," had lately shot himself.

"Unhappy Jerusalem!" Goethe wrote in reply. "Your news was shocking and quite unexpected. . . . The people who know not joy because their hearts have been hardened by vanity and the worship of illusions are responsible for this and for all our misfortunes. For them there is no forgiveness, my friends! Poor young fellow! When I came back from a walk and met him in the moonlight, I said, 'He is in love,' and Lotte will remember that I laughed. I spoke with him very little. When I left I brought away with me one of his books, which I shall preserve, with his memory, as long as I live."

Events in another's life always aroused sincere emotion in Goethe when they represented possible and unrealized fragments of his own existence. He studied Jerusalem's story with an almost morbid curiosity. He was quite aware that if he himself had been slightly different, if certain elements had been lacking in the composition of his intellect, he might have gone the same way. But he was especially interested in it because his first thought had been, when he heard the news: "Here is my *dénouement*." Yes, the hero of his unlucky idyll might, indeed he



ought to, commit suicide. Death, and death only, supplied the element of tragic grandeur that had been lacking in his adventure.

He asked Kestner to send him a complete account of all that he could learn about the affair, and Kestner did so, not without ability.

## VII

The memories of Wetzlar and the account of Jerusalem's death certainly provided Goethe with the beginning and the end of a notable book. It would be a work of the truest and most vivid passion. The part played by the imagination would be, as was always Goethe's aim, reduced to a minimum. He had confidence in himself and he liked his subject. And yet he could not get to work and was still absorbed in his dreams.

He had always needed, before he could start writing, a brief illumination in which, as in a flash of lightning, he had a sudden view of the work as a whole without having time to distinguish the details. But this time he could get no such view of it. His love affair with Lotte and the death of his friend were two episodes taken from two different series of Destiny's successions and did not fit in together.

There was nothing in the characters of the people in the diary that suggested the drama of the *dénouement*. Kestner's kindness and freedom from jealousy, Lotte's wholesome simplicity and lightness of heart, Goethe's unassailable happiness and curiosity—such qualities made the hero's suicide improbable. He tried in vain to picture to himself what the scene between Frau Herd and Jerusalem could have been like, and Jerusalem's final reflections. He must remodel the characters and weave another chain of events. But events are strangely linked together. As soon as one is touched the whole edifice is shaken. It seems that the truth must be one, and that if it is touched up a little, even with the most delicate and careful strokes, the mind is torn between an infinity of possibilities.

Once more Goethe was unable to find peace. A fantastic population of plans and projects ranged over his weary brain. Sometimes he thought he could distinguish shadowy and lovely forms, but they vanished forthwith. Like a pregnant woman who cannot find relief, he sought in vain for a position in which he could be at rest. The hour of his delivery seemed far off.

He travelled to Wetzlar to get details of the drama. He saw the house in which the young man had killed himself, the pistols, arm-chair, and bed. He spent a few hours with Charlotte. The happiness of the engaged pair seemed complete. The very recollection of their evenings of old seemed to have passed out of their calm and well-ordered

life. Goethe felt very unhappy and very lonely. His love revived. As he sat upon the sofa in the Teutonic House looking at the cool and peaceful Lotte, who continued to manage the household with her graceful competence, he said to himself, "Jerusalem was right. Even I myself could perhaps . . ." But Goethe remained Goethe and he returned quietly to Frankfurt.

The house seemed more melancholy than ever. The time of Kestner's marriage drew near. In the evening, alone in his room, "in his barren bed," Goethe pictured Charlotte in the nuptial chamber, in a blue striped dressing-jacket, her hair arranged for the night, chaste and charming. Desire and jealousy kept him painfully awake. In order to live, a man needs to look forward to some shining point, the goal of his journey. But what was there left for him to hope for? He saw himself condemned to live, as a humble lawyer or official, in this town whose commonplace middle-class would always dislike him for his intellectual gifts. His mind, which he knew to be capable of creation, would be worn out in drawing up reports or stupid statements for the courts. He thought, without modesty, but not without reason, "I shall live here like a giant chained by dwarfs."

He saw himself buried alive. All the companions of his youth left him one after another. His sister Cornelia was going to be married. His friend Merck was soon leaving for Berlin. Charlotte and her husband would in their turn go away from Wetzlar. "And I am alone. If I do not marry or hang myself, you may say that I like life very much"; thus he wrote to Kestner, and a little later: "I am wandering in waterless deserts."

He came to think that the cause of suicides must often be the need felt by a man leading a monotonous and melancholy life to astonish himself and, one might almost say, to divert his mind by an unusual action. "The love of life," he thought, "depends on the interest we take in the regular alternation of day and of night, of the seasons, and in the pleasure that these alternations offer us. When this interest comes to an end, life is simply a tedious burden. An Englishman hanged himself so as not to be forced to dress and undress every day. I heard a gardener exclaim wearily: 'Must I always be looking at those gloomy clouds passing from west to east?' These are symptoms of a disgust with life which, in thoughtful people, is commoner than is believed. As for myself, if I think about the matter coldly, what has life still to give me? Another *Frédérique* whom I shall desert? Another Lotte who will forget me? The foolish career of a lawyer at Frankfurt? Truly it would be a natural and courageous act to renounce such splendid prospects of one's own free will.

"And yet when we think of the various ways of suicide, we recognize that to diminish the number of the living is so contrary to human nature that in order to achieve the result man has recourse to mechanical aids. Though Ajax transfixes himself with his sword, it is the weight of his body that renders him this last service; when we turn a pistol on ourselves, it is the backward movement of the trigger that really kills us. The only authentic suicide is that of the Emperor Otho, who himself drove a dagger into his heart."

For several evenings when he went to bed he laid a dagger beside him. Before he put out the light he tried to drive the point into his chest. But he did not succeed in inflicting even the slightest of wounds. The body betrayed the spirit. "Ah, well," he thought, "at the bottom of my heart I must want to live."

When he looked into his heart sincerely, trying to rid himself of commonplaces, those insubstantial phantoms that hover above genuine thought, and sought for the reasons which, in spite of everything, made him wish to live, he discovered first of all his pleasure, which for him was perennial, in the marvellous spectacle of the world, that god-sent curiosity of his; then the sad sweet certainty of the approaching birth of a fresh affection; and lastly the more obscure but irresistible instinct to watch over the work that was, he felt, forming within him with an implacable deliberation.

"Don't worry," he wrote to his friends at Wetzlar. "I am almost as happy as two people who are in love, like you. I have in me as much hope as lovers have."

When the time of Charlotte's marriage drew near he asked the favour of being allowed to buy the wedding-ring. He found something of a strange pleasure in irritating this sore. Determined to portray his own sad state, he insisted that it should be hopeless. Goethe was his own model and he posed to perfection.

On the morning of the marriage, Kestner, the perfect friend, wrote him an affectionate letter. As Goethe had requested, the bride's nosegay was sent to him; he put it in his hat for his Sunday walk. He decided to take down the silhouette of Lotte on Good Friday, make a grave in the garden, and solemnly bury it. When the day came, the ceremony seemed to him a little ridiculous and he gave up the idea. The black-and-white silhouette now watched over untroubled slumbers. The Kestners had left for Hanover. Knowing nothing of their life in this new world, Goethe could not imagine it. In his case pain as well as love needed images to make it last. Had he not already let go the favourable moment for recording such fragile feelings as these?

## VIII

He was still in correspondence with the charming Maximiliane de la Roche, whose black eyes had so helped him to console himself after Wetzlar. One day he learnt that she was going to marry a wholesale grocer of Frankfurt, Peter Anton Brentano, a widower with five children, and fifteen years older than herself. "Admirable!" wrote Goethe to Kestner, "dear Max de la Roche is going to marry a prominent shopkeeper!" Doubtless the sceptical Herr de la Roche had considered a large fortune and a numerous family preferable to a youthful heart.

Goethe expressed great pity for poor Max, who, for a gloomy house in Frankfurt, was going to abandon one of the most delightful places in the world and exchange her mother's cultivated and charming circle for the society of opulent tradesmen. Still he was overjoyed to think that so charming a creature was to be within reach.

As soon as he heard of her arrival at Frankfurt, he rushed to the house, used all his powers of conquest to captivate the widower's five children, and naturally succeeded in a quarter of an hour in making himself indispensable for ever. When Goethe wished to be agreeable, no one could resist him. Brentano was flattered by the presence in his house of the Burgomaster's grandson who was said to be a bright youth, so he gave Goethe a warm welcome.

Goethe immediately recovered his ardour and flung himself into a passionate friendship with his customary impetuosity. Soon his sole purpose in life was to keep Max company, to console her for the smell of cheese and for her husband's manners, to distract her mind by taking her for walks and reading to her. Once more all work was given up. And why should he write? Is there anything that is worth the smile, the sweet expression of contentment and gratitude, that for one fleeting' instant flashes on a lovely face?

Max was not a little unhappy among the jars of oil and the barrels of herrings. She did not like Frankfurt. She tried to love her husband, but it was a difficult undertaking. Goethe became her confidant. Less practical than Charlotte Buff, she did not employ him to peel vegetables nor to pick fruit, but she spent the days with him playing duets for violoncello and piano and reading the latest French novels.

They often went out skating together. Goethe borrowed his mother's red velvet mantle and threw it round his shoulders like a cape. He skated perfectly, and as he glided along with sovereign ease, the wind behind him swelling out his royal train, he looked like a young god.

Such at least was the opinion of his mother, the Councillor's wife, and of pretty Frau Brentano, for whose benefit the performance was given.

"Everything is going very well for me," he wrote. "The three last weeks have been nothing but pleasure, and we are now just as contented and happy as it is possible to be. I say we, for since January 15th there is not a single occupation in which I have been alone; and fate, that I have so often cursed, I am now well ready to flatter and call kindly and wise, for since my sister went away this is the only gift that could be called a compensation.

"Max is still the same angel whose simple and delightful qualities appeal to every heart, and my feelings for her are the joy of my existence."

But, alas! perfect pleasure cannot last and Brentano was soon to upset this unduly agreeable situation. At the outset he had found this young fellow who took his wife for walks extremely convenient; his own time was entirely taken up by the wares of his business and no one could take his place. On several occasions he had chosen Goethe to arbitrate between his wife and himself. It seemed to him that on certain questions the good sense of all the males of the species must be in agreement. Unfortunately Goethe was an artist and, in so far, a traitor to his sex. A husband always becomes, as the comic poets have remarked, most agreeably attached to any right-thinking man, one who, in other words, is of his own way of thinking; but a lover who undermines marital authority must be deservedly odious.

Brentano, noticing that his wife was not settling down at Frankfurt, that she criticized the mode of life of an ancient and respectable family, always talked about music, literature, and other unhealthy subjects, concluded, not without reason, that some evil counsellor must be making suggestions contrary to conjugal good order, and that the enemy was Goethe.

As soon as he had come to this conclusion, he treated Goethe with such insulting coldness that the latter's position in the house became extremely difficult. If he retaliated furiously, as he would have liked to do, he would sentence himself to exile; to endure the affronts in silence was to invite their multiplication. Soon Max herself, who was tired by disputes that spoilt all her pleasure, begged him to be careful and come less often. "I ask you for my own peace and quiet," she said to him. "Things cannot go on like this, they positively cannot."

He fell to walking up and down the room with long strides, repeating between his teeth, "It cannot go on like this." Max, who noticed his violent condition, tried to calm him. "I beg you," she said to him,

"I beg you to control yourself. Your intellect, your knowledge, your talents promise you every happiness; be a man. Why must it be I? I who belong to someone else, I and no other?"

He went home, having promised that he would not come back again, but he was in a state of despair, distraught and talking to himself. So he was always to come upon the pitiful laws of society on the path of happiness. He could only find peace of mind, joy, and self-forgetfulness in the constant and affectionate society of a woman, and to obtain the right to this happiness he had either to surrender his liberty or condemn the woman he loved to become "guilty." Never had the conflict between the desires of the individual and the rules of society appeared to him so intolerable. Charlotte . . . ? Charlotte was after all in love with Kestner. But Max could not love her oil merchant and did not even pretend to love him. And he had to give way. "Your talents, your knowledge will bring you happiness." How ludicrous! Knowledge is grey and the tree of life is green. Besides, knowledge also is limited by human imperfection. What do the greatest scientists really know? Nothing about the true nature of things. What is man? His strength fails him just when he needs it most. In his joy, as in his sorrow, is he not limited, always confronted by the melancholy feeling of his own littleness just when he is hoping to lose himself in the infinite?

Quite suddenly, without knowing how the transformation had been worked, he felt once more at peace, master of himself, soaring far above these melancholy thoughts, as if they had belonged to another. "Why, of course," he thought, "that is how Jerusalem must have argued with himself; and no doubt it happened after a scene like the one I have just had with Max."

Thereupon he suddenly saw, with amazing lucidity, how his last unhappy adventure could be worked into the account of Jerusalem's death. Max and her husband, Charlotte and Kestner, Goethe and Jerusalem, seemed to melt, dissolve, and disappear, while their constituent elements, moving with incredible rapidity over the vast plains of the mind, combined harmoniously and in due proportions. The artist was awake at last, and Goethe was completely happy.

Then three new characters were born: Werther, Charlotte, and Albert. Werther was Goethe if he had not been an artist. Albert was a slightly meaner Kestner, endowed with Brentano's jealousy and with Goethe's own intellectual powers. Charlotte was Lotte, but brought up by Frau de la Roche, and a reader of Rousseau and Klopstock.

On the following day he shut himself up to work, and in four weeks the book was written.

## IX

When Goethe had finished *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* he felt as free and happy as after a general confession. Dreams, doubts, remorse, desires—all had found their eternal and inevitable place. The Cathedral was built. The last of his workmen-thoughts had already left the yard, and in the silence that had fallen on the place the Architect waited for the earliest worshippers. His past life was no longer in him, but before his eyes. It was beautiful, and as he contemplated it from the outside with a triumphant lassitude he thought vaguely of the new life that he now had the right to begin.

The book was not to be on sale until the Leipzig Fair, but the author could not wait so long before sending it to Charlotte at least. He often tried to imagine when and how she would read it. Perhaps she would begin *Werther* one evening, in bed, her firm breasts outlined under the delicate linen; or perhaps sitting in an armchair opposite Kestner, who would be a little jealous and try to find out without being observed what his wife was feeling. She would know for the first time what Goethe's love had been. She would doubtless blush when she came to the passionate scenes at the end, to the furious kisses which he had never given her and which, by an almost magical art, he could now force her to receive. . . . And dear Max Brentano? She, too, would doubtless fall to dreaming.

As soon as he had received the first volumes from the printer, he packed up two copies, one for Charlotte and one for Kestner, and wrote to Lotte: "You will realize when you read this book how dear it is to me; and this copy above all I value as much as if it were the only one in the world. It is for you, Lotte. I have kissed it a hundred times, and I kept it shut up so that no one might touch it. Oh, Lotte, I want each of you to read it by yourselves and separately. You by yourself and Kestner by himself, and then I want each of you to write me a line. Lotte—good-bye, Lotte."

Kestner and his wife smiled and hastened to obey. They each took one of the little volumes and opened it with affectionate eagerness.

Charlotte was a little uneasy. She knew Goethe's ardent nature, his refusal to restrain the violence of his feelings, to accept the useful conventions of the world. In real life, the fear of committing himself, of missing opportunities, had nearly always in the end confined this torrent of lava to a channel. But what would Goethe be like when let loose?

As soon as she had read the first pages she realized that her husband would be severely tried. The scene at the ball, so natural in her recollec-

tion, had here, she knew not how, taken on a passionate sensuality. "To hold the most charming of creatures in my arms! Fly with her like the storm! See everything about one pass and fade! To feel! . . . It was then I vowed that a woman I loved should waltz with none but me though I died for it! You will understand me."

Charlotte sat pensive. To be quite frank with herself, she had understood from the first day that Goethe loved her in this way. It was an idea that had slipped into the recesses of her consciousness; she had kept it carefully shut up there and had long since succeeded in forgetting this discreet and disturbing presence. Yet the recollection was there, for as she read the burning sentences, Charlotte felt the sweet uneasy impression of a reminiscence.

When she came to the passage: "What fire runs through all my veins when my finger happens to touch hers, when our feet come together under the table. I start away as from a flame, but a secret force draws me back once more. I am seized with giddiness and my senses are in a whirl. Ah! her innocence, the purity of her soul prevent her from realizing how the slightest familiarities put me to the torture. When she puts her hand on mine, as she talks to me . . ." Charlotte put the book down and reflected for some time. Had she not, in moments like those of which she had just read the description, nearly always guessed Goethe's agitation, and found it not at all displeasing? Even now to read the account of it made her, she had to admit, surprisingly happy. She reproached herself for her coquetry. She looked at her husband sitting opposite her. He was rapidly turning over the pages of the little volume with a gloomy and worried expression.

After a short interval he raised his eyes in his turn and asked her what she was thinking about. He seemed angry and ill at ease. "It is a disgraceful act," he said warmly. "Goethe describes people who at the outset are like ourselves and then he changes them in some way into false and romantic characters. . . . What sort of creature is this sentimental Lotte who weeps unceasingly over Werther's hand? . . . Did you ever say, 'Oh, Klopstock!' and look up at the sky, especially to a young man whom you had only just met? I find it difficult to picture you in such a part. . . . Ah! I can now see clearly that Goethe has never understood what gives you your charm. It is I alone, Charlotte, I alone who understand that. What is so attractive in you is just your perfect simplicity that is never out of place, that joyous and natural self-possession of yours that banishes all evil thoughts. But he has even spoilt his own portrait. The real Goethe behaved much better than Werther. There was something fine and generous about our relations during those four months which he has not been able to express. . . .



As for myself, whom he has described as so destitute of sensibility, I whose heart 'does not beat sympathetically at the reading of a favourite book,' am I so cold as all that? Oh, I know very well that if I had had to lose you, Lotte, it is I who would have been Werther."

At this instant husband and wife drew near to each other, and there followed a little scene of conjugal affection which would not, perhaps, have been exactly in accordance with the author's wishes. They finished the book together, side by side and hand in hand. At the end of it Kestner, at any rate, was in a state of acute anger. The transformation of their innocent simple story into a tragic adventure seemed to him really abominable. He was indeed a monster—this two-headed individual who was both Goethe and Jerusalem. And no doubt Kestner did not fail to notice that the account of the last interview between Werther and his beloved was taken entirely from the letter that he had himself written to Goethe about the death of Jerusalem. But when he was confronted with a heroine whose name was Lotte, and who at the beginning of the book had been described with all Lotte's characteristics, he was as hurt as if some coarse-minded painter had taken the face and person of his wife for the subject of an obscene picture.

Charlotte herself was more moved than displeased, but she could imagine and sympathize with her husband's feelings, and in order to soothe him she said she thought he was right. Besides, she shared his apprehensions. What would be said about them in their own circle? All their friends in Wetzlar and even in Hanover could not fail to recognize them. How would it be possible to explain which parts of the book faithfully presented them and which were alien additions? How could they escape all the malicious and quite natural gossip? If they had been less sensitive they would have realized that society is, in general, profoundly indifferent and forgetful, and what seemed now so very important would be quite forgotten in six months. But Wisdom and Pain seldom keep house together. They felt that their happy retired life had been wrecked by their friend's indiscretion.

X

On the following day Kestner wrote to Goethe in terms of severe displeasure. "It is true that you have interwoven some alien elements into each character and that you have blended several persons into one. Well and good. But if in these processes of interweaving and blending you had consulted your heart, the real people whose characteristics you have borrowed would not have been prostituted in this way. You wished to draw from nature in order to give verisimilitude to your picture, and you have brought together so many contradictory elements

that you have failed in your purpose. The real Lotte would indeed be a poor creature if she were like your Lotte. And Lotte's husband—you called him your friend, and God knows whether he was so—is in like case.

"What a wretched object Albert is! If he had to be commonplace, was it necessary to make him such an utter idiot for you to be able to dominate him so haughtily and say: 'See what a fine fellow I am'?"

Goethe had for several days waited very impatiently for Kestner's and Lotte's opinions. He hoped for two long and enthusiastic letters, a list of passages that had more especially struck them, some quotations perhaps, a reminder of incidents that he had forgotten or missed out. He broke the seal with a cheerful sense of curiosity and was dumbfounded to come upon this bitter criticism. Was it possible that an intelligent man could so little understand the nature of a book? Why should he want Werther to be Goethe? "No doubt there are elements of Werther in me. But I was suddenly rescued from all that by something that is called Will. Take this away from Goethe and Werther will be left. Take away his imagination and we shall find Albert. Why does he say that Albert is a wretched creature? Why should I have made Albert commonplace? The beauty of my subject is that though Albert and Werther are opposed to each other, they fight on equal terms. Besides, what makes Kestner think that he is Albert? Does he believe that I am incapable of discovering a reasonable being in myself?"

The more he thought it over, the more he re-read Kestner's letter, the less he understood it and the more astonished he was. Yet it was distressing to him to think that he was giving his friends pain. He tried for a long time to find a means of pacifying them. But what was he to do? Not publish his novel? He had not the courage for that sacrifice.

"I must write at once and unburden my soul to you, my dear angry friends. The thing is done, the book is out; forgive me if you can. I will not listen to anything until events have proved how exaggerated are your fears, until you come to see in the book itself the harmless mingling of fact and fiction that it contains. . . . And now, my dears, when you feel anger rising within you, think, only think, that your old friend Goethe is always, always, and now more than ever, yours."

The publication of the book involved the Kestners, as they had anticipated, in requests for explanations and expressions of sympathy. Lotte's brother, Hans Buff, sent them the impression of the Teutonic House. There, at least, everyone knew Goethe, and young Werther's sufferings had had an uproarious success.

"By the way," wrote Hans, "have you read *Werther*? What do you think of it? The situation here is singular. There are only two copies

in the whole town, and as everyone wants to read the book, everyone steals them as best he can. Yesterday evening, Papa, Caroline, Lele, Wilhelm, and I were all of us reading a single copy whose cover we had torn off. Each page passed through five hands. . . . Poor Werther! We laughed a great deal when we read it. Did he laugh too when he wrote it?"

Kestner had to assure his officious friends who sent their condolences, that his home life was happy, that his wife had always loved him, that Goethe had never thought of committing suicide, and that a novel was only a novel. Finally, Charlotte induced him to write Goethe a letter granting him absolution.

But there was little question of forgiveness. The young author was completely carried away. All Germany was now shedding tears over Werther's fate. The young men wore his blue frockcoat and yellow waistcoat and his brown-topped boots. The young women copied Charlotte's dresses, and above all the white dress with pink bows that she had worn at her first meeting with her friend. In every garden romantic hearts raised little monuments to Werther's memory. Climbing plants twined themselves about Wertherian urns. Songs and poems were written about Werther. The French themselves, so often contemptuous, welcomed this disciple of Rousseau with enthusiasm. Europe had not been so roused by a work of the imagination since *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Goethe answered in a tone which was scarcely that of a penitent. "O ye of little faith! If you could feel the thousandth part of what Werther stands for in a thousand hearts you would not even stop to think of the sacrifice that you have made for him. I would not, to save my own life, see Werther suppressed. Kestner, believe me, believe in me; your fears and your uneasiness will vanish away like the phantoms of a night. If you are generous, and if you do not worry me, I will send you letters, tears, sighs over Werther; and if you have faith, believe me, all will go well and gossip does not matter. Lotte, good-bye. Kestner, love me and do not bother me any more."

After this date his correspondence with the Kestners became extremely desultory.

Thenceforward, embalmed and enshrined in his sentences, they had lost for him the greater part of their reality. Once a year, over a long period, he wrote them letters which began "My Dear Children," to ask for news of a continually increasing family. Then the excellent Kestner died.

In 1816 Frau Sekretärin Kestner, a widow of fifty-nine, plain but pleasantly good-humoured, came to visit His Excellency the Minister

of State von Goethe at Weimar. She hoped that the great man might be useful to her sons August and Theodore, especially to Theodore, who wished to devote himself to the study of natural science.

She found a cultivated but worn-out old gentleman in whose features she looked in vain for the face of the wild youth of Wetzlar, whom no one could help loving. Conversation was difficult. Goethe, who did not know what to say, showed her prints and dried plants. Each of them read in the other's eyes astonishment and disillusion.

The Minister finally offered the old lady his own box at the theatre, excusing himself for not being able to join her there later. She thought, as she went out, "If I had met him by accident and without knowing his name, he would have made no impression on me."

The truth is that Doctor Goethe had long been dead; dead too was Fräulein Lotte Buff, who had so loved dancing and walks by moonlight. Of all the characters in this story one only was still alive, and that was the unhappy Werther.

# Walt Whitman

STUART P. SHERMAN (1881-1926)

Stuart Pratt Sherman once called himself a representative of the "floating population." He was born in Iowa and brought up in California, Arizona, Vermont, and Massachusetts. After taking an A.B. at Williams in 1903 and a Ph.D. at Harvard three years later, he settled down for a long stretch of teaching in the Middle West, two years at Northwestern and sixteen at the University of Illinois. Bounding rapidly up the academic ladder, he was a full professor at thirty. His fame as a critic soon spread far from Urbana. When in 1924 he was offered the position of literary editor on the New York *Herald-Tribune*, he gave up teaching. "I feared," he wrote, "that if I stayed on in my profession for another twenty years I should be made a dean." He had been only three years in his new profession when he died suddenly in Michigan at the age of forty-four.

In 1917 Sherman published two books which made him widely known: *Matthew Arnold: How to Know Him*, a critical biography, and *On Contemporary Literature*, a militant attack directed chiefly against the growing naturalism in American letters. His other critical works include *Americans* (1922), from which "Walt Whitman" is taken, *The Significance of Sinclair Lewis* (1922), *The Genius of America* (1923), *Points of View* (1924), *Critical Woodcuts* (1926), and two posthumous collections, *The Main Stream* (1927) and *The Emotional Discovery of America* (1932). Sherman's career in criticism was marked by controversy, particularly with his arch-enemy, H. L. Mencken, and there has been wide disagreement among those who have tried to trace and explain the flux of his critical attitudes. Generally speaking, he seems to have shifted from a position of entrenched reaction against new literary movements to one of open-minded tolerance, from a follower of Irving Babbitt's humanism to a disinterested student, of no school at all.

If biography is no more than a recounting of the external events in a man's life, the biographical thread in Sherman's estimate of Walt Whitman is slight indeed. But in any true portrait of a real poet, the cast of his mind is far more important than the number of his wives. Too many popular attempts to isolate "Byron the man" from his works have made a mere Don Juan, an adventurer, of a great poetic virtuoso. Whitman too has been misrepresented by fragmentary and distorted views. Stuart Sherman pictures the man, the poet, and the philosopher as one. He blends elements of biography, character-analysis, and literary criticism in an estimate of the mind, temperament, and work of the

poet of democracy; and his essay illustrates a combination of methods which recurs perennially in the writing of literary history.

WHITMAN INTERESTS AND DISQUIETS US beyond all other American poets by that personality of his, so original, so indolent yet intense, so fearlessly flaunted yet so enigmatically reserved, so palpably carnal yet so illuminated with mystical ardor that at the first bewildering contact one questions whether his urgent touch is of lewdness or divinity. There is something daimonic in the effluence of the man, which visitors remark and remember months and years afterwards as an impulse unaccountably affecting the temper of their lives. It is a sign by which one recognizes native power of one sort or another quite above talent. Hawthorne and other observers were conscious of such an effluence from Whitman's master, Emerson—"a pure, intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one." But the aura of the disciple, who roves so far from the decorous circle of the Concord Platonist, was, I fancy, spiked with yellow flame, like the gold-colored nimbus that he sought to paint above the heads of his fellow countrymen—"I paint many heads: but I paint no head without its nimbus of gold-colored light." "Something a little more than human," commented Thoreau, that cool-blooded New Englander, after an hour's conversation with the bard. Edward Carpenter, an English pilgrim who visited him in 1877, says that in the first ten minutes he became conscious "of an impression which subsequently grew even more marked—the impression, namely of immense vista or background in his personality." As to the final quality of Whitman's personal effluence the testimony of John Burroughs, recorded in 1878, should be decisive: "After the test of time nothing goes home like the test of actual intimacy, and to tell me that Whitman is not a large, fine, fresh magnetic personality, making you love him, and want always to be with him, were to tell me that my whole past life is a deception, and all the perception of my impressions is a fraud." His appeal to the imagination was not diminished by his offering to the eye. The mere physical image of him standing against the sky, so nonchalant and imperturbable in his workman's shirt and trousers, as in his first edition of 1855, is, or was, of a novel and compelling effrontery in the smooth gallery of our national statuary. Like the image of Franklin at Paris in his coonskin cap, the image of Lincoln as the railsplitter, or of Mark Twain as the Mississippi pilot, or of Roosevelt as Rough Rider, so the image of Walt Whitman as the carpenter or printer turned bard in Manhattan

pleases one's taste for the autochthonous, the home-grown. More than that, it touches the heart by symbolizing the national sense that, after all our civilizing efforts, we live still in an unfinished world. He acquired blandness with the years; yet even in his mild old age he looked out from under his wide-brimmed hat and from the cloudy covert of beard and hair with no academic mien—rather with the untamed and heroic aspect of

Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.

On the centenaries of most of the American poets who flourished at the time when the *Leaves of Grass* was first put forth, we enquire rather coldly and incuriously what is left of them. They have sadly dwindled—most of them—they have lost their warmth for us, they have become irrelevant to our occasions. Whitman still with astonishing completeness lives. He lives because he marvelously well identified that daimonic personality with his book, so that whoever touches it, as he himself declared, touches a man, and a man of singularly intense perceptiveness. One can hardly exaggerate the potency of Whitman's imaginative process—a process easier to illustrate than to define. Let us take, for example, these lines on the fugitive slave and consider the almost intolerable immediacy of the presentment:

The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing,  
cover'd with sweat,  
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the murderous  
buckshot and the bullets—  
All these I feel or am.  
I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs;  
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksman;  
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd with the ooze  
of my skin;  
I fall on the weeds and stones.  
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,  
Taunt my dizzy ears and beat me violently over the head with  
whip stocks.  
Agonies are one of my changes of garments.  
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels; I myself become the  
wounded person;  
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

This is the method of Whitman: imaginative contemplation of the object, which identifies him with the object. It does not suggest comparison with the method of Longfellow or of Tennyson. It reminds one rather of the imaginative contemplation practised by mediaeval saints,

which brought out in hands and brow the marks of the Crucifixion. The vitality and validity of Whitman's report is not that of an experience observed but rather that of an experience repeated.

But Whitman lives for another reason which is worth dwelling upon for the sake of young poets eager for immortality. He lives because of the richness of his vital reference, the fulness of the relations which he established between his book and the living world. There is a sect of poets to-day, with attendant critics, who expect to outlast their age by shunning contact with its hopes and fears, by avoiding commitments and allegiances, and by confining themselves to decorating the interior of an ivory tower in the style of Kubla Khan. Whitman made his bid for perpetuity on another basis. He identified himself and his chants with innumerable things that are precious and deathless—with his wide-extended land and the unending miracles of the seasons, with the independence and union and destiny of "These States," with common people and heroes, their proud memories, their limitless aspiration, and with the sunlight and starlight of the over-arching heaven. Committing himself to democratic America, he surrendered with "immitigable adoration" to a spirit that preserved and magnified him with its own unfolding greatness. And so as the seasons return, he returns with the spring and the musical winds and tides that play about his beloved Mannahatta, with the subtle odor of lilacs in the dooryard, with valor and suffering and victory, with the thoughts and words that perennially consecrate the old battlefield at Gettysburg, with the young men returning from the latest "great war," with civil labor resumed and civil comradeship, with furled flags and May-time and hopes recurrent. He returns; and if we wish to salute him, he will give us the tune:

Again old heart so gay, again to you, your sense, the full flush spring  
returning;

Again the freshness and the odors, again Virginia's summer sky,  
pellucid blue and silver;

Again the forenoon purple of the hills;

Again the deathless grass, so noiseless, soft and green,

Again the blood-red roses blooming.

But why is this interesting and vital personality important to us? Open the *Leaves of Grass*, and you will find this piquantly intimate answer: "I considered long and seriously of you before you were born." Other poets have given little thought to us, and we, in compensation, give little thought to them; for we modern men and women of realistic temper go not to literature to escape from life, but to intensify our sense of it and to find a spirit that will animate us in the thick of it.



Whitman, proclaimer of egotism, foresaw our intentness upon our own enterprises, and prepared for the day when we should demand of him: "What have you said, Poet, that concerns us?" Though he is saturated with historical and contemporary references, nothing in him is merely contemporary, merely historical. He gathers up ages, literatures, philosophies, and consumes them as the food of passion and prophecy. He strides with the energy and momentum of the national past into the national future, towering above a poetical movement which he has fathered, scattering social and political and religious gospels, with troops of disciples and unbelievers in this and other lands, crying still proudly as of old: "All that I have said concerns you." He is important, because he recognized that, though there are many ways by which a man can attract attention and get a temporary hearing, there is only one way by which he can permanently interest and attach the affections of the American people and so hold a place among the great Americans: that is by helping them unfold the meanings, fulfil the promises, and justify the faith of democratic society.

By making himself important to the American people as the poetic interpreter of their political and social ideals, Whitman, as things are turning out, finds himself now [1922] mid-stream in the democratic movement which encompasses the earth. At the present time it is manifest that, in spite of obstacles and cross-currents, the central current of the world is making towards democracy. Whatever else it involves, democracy involves at least one grand salutary elementary admission, namely, that the world exists for the benefit and for the improvement of all the decent individuals in it. Till recently this admission in many quarters had never been made, had been savagely opposed. It is covertly, secretly, indirectly opposed in many quarters of our own country even to-day. Now the indications are that those who oppose it are going to be outnumbered and overwhelmed. The movement is on, and it will not be stopped. Wise men, ambitious men, far-sighted men will not attempt to block it. They will adapt themselves to it, they will cooperate with it, they will direct and further it as the only way in which they may hope to be of any cheerful significance in the era opening before them. The "ruling class," the statesmen, in all nations will find their mission and their honor progressively dependent upon their capacity for bringing the entire body of humanity into an harmonious and satisfactory life.

Now the supreme power of Whitman consists in this: that his spirit works inwardly, like religion, upon other spirits, quickening and preparing them for this general human fellowship, this world society, which to him, as to many of his great predecessors, appeared to be the

legitimate far-off consequence of the principles declared by the American fathers. "Cosmopolitanism" has of late suffered many indignities as a word and as a conception; and those who speak of an international society are readily charged with treasonable and anarchical innovation. In the spiritual sense of the word no aspiration is, as a matter of fact, more thoroughly American and traditional than cosmopolitanism. "God grant," exclaimed Franklin, "that not only the love of liberty but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its surface and say, 'This is my country.'" By statesmen like Washington, Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, or Lincoln this utterance would have been accepted as suggesting the ultimate fruition of the highest statecraft. The diffusion of a spirit among men which will support and make possible such statecraft appeared to writers like Emerson and Whitman as perhaps the central function of the serious man of letters.

"I hate literature," said Whitman, conversing in Camden with colloquial over-emphasis. What he meant was that he rejected the famous "play-theory" of art and looked with disdain upon *belles-lettres* in their merely recreative and decorative aspects. "Literature is big," he explained on another occasion, "only in one way—when used as an aid in the growth of the humanities—a furthering of the cause of the masses—a means whereby men may be revealed to each other as brothers." Recognizing that "the real work of democracy is done underneath its politics," Whitman conceived of his mission from first to last as moral and spiritual; and nothing could be sillier than the current criticism which derides a sense of mission in the poet and at the same time proudly salutes Whitman as the chief American poet. It is as if one should say, "I am very fond of walnuts, but I don't like the meats." Not a part but the whole of his lifework is permeated with religious and moral intention. What gives to the *Leaves of Grass* its cumulative effect is its many-sided development of a single theme, of which I shall give one more of his conversational descriptions: "I am for getting all the walls down—all of them. . . . While I seem to love America, and wish to see America prosperous, I do not seem able to bring myself to love America, to desire American prosperity, at the expense of some other nation." "But must we not take care of home first of all?" asked Dudley. "Perhaps," replied Whitman, "but what is home—to the humanitarian, what is home?"

It is as easy and natural to disparage this diffusive humanitarian sentiment as it is to ignore that difficult central precept of Christianity which prescribes one's feeling towards one's neighbor. Every one knows, for example, Roosevelt's scornful comparison of the man who loves

his own country no better than another to the man who loves his own wife no better than another. Roosevelt, who had a great talent for bringing forward and glorifying the simple elementary passions, has had his share of applause. When the applause dies away and reflection begins, it occurs to some of us that the simple elementary passions pretty well look after themselves. No very rare talent is required to commend to the average man the simple elementary passions. He takes to them by a primitive urge of his being as the bull moose takes to fighting and mating. Nature has given them a vigor and hardiness which provides against their extinction. Meanwhile our societies, national and international, do not run as smoothly and efficiently as men who hate waste and confusion desire. They seem to clamor from their discordant and jarring gear for some motive and regulative power other than the simple elementary passions. What nature has overlooked and neglected or inadequately attended to is the development of those feelings which fit men to live harmoniously in complex civil societies. So that the special task for those who would ameliorate our modern world is to bring forward and glorify an order of emotions quite unknown to the Cave Man—a mutual understanding and imaginative sympathy which begin to develop and operate only when the elementary urges of our nature have been checked and subdued by a reflective culture. Over most of the once-called great statesmen of Whitman's period and of our own generation—the Bismarcks, the Disraelis, the Roosevelts—there falls the shadow of great tasks from which they shrank and the darker and still present shadow of a great calamity which their fostering of the elementary passions helped to bring upon us. In the present posture of the world I think we should not scorn so resolute a patriot as Whitman, who had lived through two or three wars, for confessing the growth in himself and for promoting the growth in others of a sense like this:

This moment yearning and thoughtful sitting alone,  
It seems to me there are other men in other lands yearning and  
thoughtful;  
It seems to me I can look over and behold them in Germany, Italy,  
France, Spain,  
Or far, far away in China, or in Russia or Japan, talking other  
dialects.  
And it seems to me if I could know these men I should become at-  
tached to them as I do to men in my own lands.  
O I know we should be brethren and lovers;  
I know I should be happy with them.

There is at least an appearance of inconsistency between this limitless

humanitarian sympathy of Whitman and his enthusiastic nationalism. There is at least an appearance of inconsistency between his enthusiastic nationalism and his resolute individualism. But let us not forget the appearance of fundamental conflict between the multitude of the heavenly host crying peace on earth and the words of him they heralded saying, "I came not to bring peace but a sword." The exploration of the ground between these opposites, the reconciliation of jarring antinomies, is a task from which statesmen shrink. It is precisely the master task of the poetic and religious imagination. Whitman, as the opening lines of his book declare, recognized it as the very heart of his theme:

One's-Self I sing—a simple, separate Person;  
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word *En-masse*.

There is the mystery which enchanted him and which perplexes us still—the mystery of the coexistence of personal freedom with social authority. He believed in both, just as for centuries men have believed in the coexistence of free-will with foreknowledge absolute. No one has a right to call his reconciliation of the individual with society inadequate who has not taken the trouble to hear the whole of his song and its commentaries in "Democratic Vistas" and "Specimen Days"; for part supports part, and the whole is greater than the sum of them. No other poet exhibits himself so inadequately in extracts. One gets nearly all of Gray in the "Elegy"; but one can no more get all of Whitman in "O Captain! My Captain" than one can get all of a modern symphony in the sound of the flutes or oboes. Whitman is not primarily a melodist. His strength is in the rich interweaving of intricate and difficult harmonies.

In the life-long evolution of his work, he was seeking a concord of soul and body, individual and society, state and nation, nation and the family of nations, some grand chord to unite the dominant notes of all. In his quest for this harmony he clothes himself in his country as in a garment; he becomes America feeling out her relations with the world. I seem to distinguish in his poems three great successive movements or impulses corresponding roughly to the three periods of the national life in which he had his being. The first is a movement of individualistic expansion corresponding to the period before the Civil War. The second is a movement of concentration corresponding to the period of the war. The third is a resumed movement of "individualistic" expansion following the war, and spiritualized by it.

It can hardly be too much emphasized that Whitman and America went through their adolescence together and that the arrogance of his

advent in poetry matches the defiant attitude of the young republic. Born at West Hills, Long Island, May 31, 1819, Walt Whitman had a lively consciousness of his inheritance from the French and American revolutions. In his boyhood he had actually been touched by Lafayette. He knew an old friend of Tom Paine's. His own father, though an uneducated man, had caught the free-thinking habit of the eighteenth century. As he grew towards manhood, he felt stirring around him that intoxicating welter of radical enthusiasms and rosy idealisms which in the forties and fifties was loosely described as Transcendentalism, and which remains to this day the most variously fascinating and fragrant blossoming of mind that America has exhibited. It was a delighted movement of emancipation from the old world and her unholy alliances. It was still more a resolute affirmation of faith in the new world and her unexplored possibilities—faith in the resources of nature and the capacity of man to appropriate them. Inspiring voices were in the air, and every voice cried in one fashion or another: "Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine Providence has found for you; the society of your contemporaries, the connexion of events. Great men have always done so and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the Eternal was stirring at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being."

In his roving early days as teacher, printer, editor; reading his Dante and Shakespeare in a wood by the sea; visiting New Orleans and wandering home again by the Mississippi and the Great Lakes, Whitman heard these voices of his age pealing in his ear with an ever more imperative summons, "Trust thyself." And Whitman resolved to trust himself, soul and body, and to trust his time and place, and to commit himself for better or for worse to the society of his contemporaries and the spiritual current flowing beneath American events. There has been much discussion of Whitman's indebtedness at this point to the inspiration of Emerson. It seems clear on the one hand that Whitman sent a copy of his edition of 1855 to Emerson; that in his edition of 1856 he printed Emerson's letter of acknowledgment and spoke of him as "friend and master"; and that in the conversations of his later years with Traubel he repeatedly talked of Emerson with admiration and reverence. It is clear, on the other hand, that Emerson looked upon Whitman as a representative of the new America, for whom he had in some sense prepared the way, and that on July 21, 1855, he wrote to the then almost unknown poet the following memorable letter:

DEAR SIR: I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift of *Leaves of Grass*. I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. I am very happy in reading it, as great power makes us happy. It meets the demand I am always making of what seems the sterile and stingy Nature, as if too much handiwork or too much lymph in the temperament were making our Western wits fat and mean. I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things, said incomparably well, as they must be. I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can inspire.

I greet you at the beginning of a great career, which yet must have had a long foreground, for such a start. I rubbed my eyes a little to see if this sunbeam were no illusion; but the solid sense of the book is a sober certainty. It has the best merits, namely, of fortifying and encouraging.

I did not know, until I last night saw the book advertised in a newspaper, that I could trust the name as real and available for a post-office.

I wish to see my benefactor, and have felt much like striking my tasks, and visiting New York to pay you my respects.

R. W. Emerson

Now Whitman's "free and brave thought," his determination to trust himself, body and soul, impelled him in the first gush of his self-expression to glorify his earthy and instinctive impulses with a flamboyance which Emerson and many other critics were to condemn as distasteful, shocking, or even dangerous. The powerful virtue in the chants before the war, the virtue for the sake of which Emerson overlooked whatever in them he distasted, was their "fortifying and encouraging" individualism. It is an individualism of adolescent America, unchecked by political experience, modified and colored by emotional attachments to the American scene and the American actors. It is such a passion as made such an indigenous individual as Thoreau love Walden Pond and refuse to pay his taxes. It is an individualism further tempered, however, from the first by a profound sense of the general human brotherhood and a hatred of unearned special privilege. Heir of the Revolutionary Era, Whitman is an equalitarian of a sort. "By God," he exclaims, "I will accept nothing which all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms." But for bringing in the reign of Equality he confides in men rather than in political mechanisms. "Produce," he asserts, "Produce great persons, the rest follows." He is the Declaration of Independence incarnate. He desires followers but only such as are moved by inner impulse; he will not have clubs studying him nor "schools" trooping after him. Markedly like Emerson and Thoreau in this respect, he is wary of organizations which prescribe the conduct of the individual and relieve him of his personal danger and responsibility.

He will stand or fall in his own strength. He is wary of organized majorities. Almost in the spirit of Washington he warns against the savageness and wolfishness of parties, so combative, so intolerant of the idea of equal brotherhood and the interests of all. "It behooves you," he declared, "to convey yourself implicitly to no party, nor submit blindly to their dictators, but steadily hold yourself judge and master over all of them." "I am a radical of radicals," he repeats from youth to grey old age. Beside this utterance one should place his golden words to his biographer Traubel: "Be radical; be radical; be not too damned radical." Despite such cautionary modifications, however, one may say that Whitman's primary impulse is one of revolt against whatever deprives the simple separate person of his right to freedom and the pursuit of happiness.

But the second movement of Whitman's mind proves him a far more complex phenomenon than most of the critics have acknowledged. Mr. George Santayana represents him as a kind of placid animal wallowing unreflectively in the stream of his own sensations. This view of him may indeed be supported by reference to certain of his passages which express with unwise exuberance his delight in the reports of his senses. The unwisdom of his exuberance with reference to the sexual life, for example, is pretty nearly demonstrated by the number of critics whose critical faculty has been quite upset by it; so that they can find nothing significant in this prophet of the new world but his shamelessness. "Hold off from sensuality," enjoined Cicero (who, by the way, was not a Victorian) "for, if you have given yourself up to it, you will find yourself unable to think of anything else." This precept rests upon physiological and psychological facts which Whitman's experiments in heliotherapy have not altered. To put a serpent in a show-window does not blunt its fangs. But to represent Whitman as exclusively or finally preoccupied with the life of the senses is not to represent him whole. It is to ignore a fact which flames from the completed *Leaves of Grass*, namely, that he is one of the "twice-born"—that he had a new birth in the spirit of the Civil War and a rebaptism of blood. His book as it now stands is built around that event, and the martyred President is the palpitating heart of it. That Whitman emerged from the warm shallows of his individual sensibility, that he immersed himself in the spiritual alteration of his position is established by his conduct and temper in the war.

Through the long agony of the struggle, Whitman went about the military hospitals, nursing the sick and wounded from every state without exception; with malice toward none, with charity for all, tenderly compassionate toward Northerner and Southerner alike. In his "Notes

of a Hospital Nurse" he records his affectionate ministrations to two brothers mortally wounded in the same battle but on opposite sides; and he remarks almost as if he himself were a neutral above the conflict, "Each died for his cause." The accent of his compassion recalls the perplexed sadness of that touching passage in the Second Inaugural where Lincoln reflects that "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other." Almost in the manner of an outraged pacifist, Whitman, after describing an attack on a hospital train, comments as follows: "Multiply the above by scores, aye hundreds—light it with every lurid passion, the wolf's, the lion's lapping thirst for blood—the passionate boiling volcanoes of human revenge for comrades, brothers slain—with the light of burning farms, and heaps of smutting, smouldering black embers—and you have an inkling of this war." Yet despite his abhorrence of cruelty and despite his compassion for suffering, Whitman's sympathy does not blunt the edge of his judgment. He is no more a pacifist or a neutral than Lincoln himself. Though his eyes are fixed daily on the dreadful cost of his moral and political faith, he remains a passionate and unrelenting Unionist. Like the great captain whom he was to salute as "the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands," he has sunk his personal sensibilities in the larger and more precious life of the nation. Till the war is over he cries with full heart: "Thunder on! stride on, Democracy! Strike with vengeful stroke." In his vision of the indispensable One encompassing the Many he salutes the sacrificial flag with an outflaming national loyalty incomprehensible to the conscientious objector:

Angry cloth I saw there leaping!  
 I stand again in leaden rain your flapping folds saluting,  
 I sing you over all, flying beckoning through the fight—O the hard-  
 contested fight!  
 The cannons ope their rosy-flashing muzzles—the hurtled balls  
 scream,  
 The battle-front forms amid the smoke—the volleys pour incessant  
 from the line,  
 Hark, the ringing word *Charge!* now the tussle and the furious  
 maddening yells,  
 Now the corpses tumble curl'd upon the ground,  
*Cold, cold in death, for precious life of you,*  
*Angry cloth I saw there leaping.*

In the era of reconstruction after the war Whitman reconstructs his individualism in the light of his allegiance to the Union. Musing deeply of "these warlike days and of peace return'd, and the dead that return no more," he hears a phantom with stern visage bidding him chant the



poem "that comes from the soul of America, chant me the carol of victory." Brooding once again upon the old mystery, why Lincoln wished to preserve the Union, what justified those rivers of fraternal blood, he bursts into this explanation of the ultimate purpose of a modern democratic state, and offers it, as will be noted at the end, to America militant:

I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things,  
 It is not the earth, it is not America who is great,  
 It is I who am great or to be great, it is You up there, or any one,  
 It is to walk rapidly through civilizations, governments, theories,  
 Through poems, pageants, shows, to form individuals.  
 Underneath all, individuals,  
 I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals,  
 The American compact is altogether with individuals,  
 The only government is that which makes minute of individuals,  
 The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single  
 individual—namely, to You  
 (Mother! with subtle sense severe, with the naked sword in your  
 hand,  
 I saw you at last refuse to treat but directly with individuals.)

There is a definition of purpose which cuts into Treitschke's cold-blooded assertion that "the individual has no right to regard the State as a means for attaining his own ambitions in life." And it cuts with equal keenness into the conception of those younger international, revolutionary statesmen who, ignoring individuals, propose to deal with classes, legislate for one class, and institute world-wide class-war. But let us admit, also, that it strikes quite as deeply into the pretensions of any class whatsoever, which governing in its own interest, becomes the oppressor and parasite of the body politic. These stalwart American individuals whom Whitman demands in immense numbers as the counterpoise to the levelling State cut all classes to pieces. "The pride and centripetal isolation of a human being in himself," he says in one of his timely pregnant passages, is the check, "whereby Nature restrains the deadly original relentlessness of all her first-class laws."

There is no reconciliation of this haughty individualism with his haughty nationalism possible except through faith—faith to believe that the American type of democratic government is the form best adapted to the production of the largest possible number of great and happy individuals. Rise to that faith, and you find within reach a principle of reconciliation between your proud nationalism, and that profound and sacred instinct in you which impels you to join hands with men and women who live under other flags yet belong to the same great civil

society. Keep your eyes fixed on the true goal of national life and you may keep your national loyalty even in a league of nations. You may say in all honesty and with the full ardor of patriotic exaltation: "O America, because you build for mankind, I build for you."

Whitman is not the altogether intoxicated believer in democracy that he is usually made out to be. We may as well embrace this faith, such is the entirely sober argument of "Democratic Vistas," because the experiment is going to be tried, whether we like it or not. The deep currents of the times set that way: "Whatever may be said in the way of abstract argument, for or against the theory of a wider democratizing of institutions in any civilized country, much trouble might well be saved to all European lands by recognizing this palpable fact (for a palpable fact it is), that some form of such democracy is about the only resource now left. *That*, or chronic dissatisfaction continued, mutterings which grow annually louder and louder, till, in due course, and pretty swiftly in most cases, the inevitable crisis, crash, dynastic ruin. Anything worthy to be called statesmanship in the Old World, I should say, among the advanced students, adepts, or men of any brains, does not debate today whether to hold on, attempting to lean back and monarchize, or to look forward and democratize—but *how*, and in what degree and part, most prudently to democratize."

On the occasion of his centenary celebration there was much inconclusive discussion as to whether, had he lived in these days, he would have been a "Bolshevist."

If Whitman had lived at the right place in these years of the Proletarian Millennium, he would have been hanged as a reactionary member of the *bourgeoisie*. First, he distrusts schemes of doctrinaires instituting a new order in sudden and violent contravention of nature, as these lines witness:

Were you looking to be held together by lawyers?

Or argument on paper? or by arms?

Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere.

Secondly, he had a realistic scheme of his own for stabilizing democratic society by absorbing the upper and lower economic strata into a renovated and homogeneous middle: "The true gravitation hold of liberalism in the United States will be a more universal ownership of property, general homesteads, general comfort—a vast, intertwining reticulation of wealth. As the human frame, or indeed, any object in this manifold universe, is best kept together by the simple miracle of its own cohesion, and the necessity, exercise and profit thereof, so a great and varied nationality, occupying millions of square miles, were

firmest held and knit by the principle of the safety and endurance of the aggregate of its middling property holders. So that, from another point of view, ungracious as it may sound, and a paradox after what we have been saying, democracy looks with suspicious, ill-satisfied eye upon the very poor, the ignorant, and on those out of business. She asks for men and women with occupations, well-off, owners of houses and acres, and with cash in the bank and with some cravings for literature, too; and must have them." A passage by no means devoid of political sagacity.

Thirdly, Whitman is not in the least content as a final term of progress with the material civilization which he expects and demands as the stage following the founding of fundamental institutions and laws. "The fruition of democracy, on aught like a grand scale," he declares with emphasis, "resides altogether in the future." Like most imaginative writers who have striven to present a vast and complex vision, he has been grievously misunderstood. His great songs are songs of faith, winged with anticipative ecstasy, outflying the literal and the humdrum, soaring down that far vista at the end of which a "sublime and serious Religious Democracy" will sternly take command. He has been described as a noisy braggart about himself and his country; but he is complacent with hope, not fulfillment. What he is bragging about is God, that power not ourselves working through man and nature and mysteriously bringing vast designs to pass in spite of all that the almost infinite wickedness and ignorance of man can do to thwart him.

Finally, Whitman would have been hanged by a canny council of workmen because of the germs of a new aristocracy lurking in his "great persons," his powerful free individuals, and pervading, indeed, all that he says or sings. He is a reader of the newspapers and passes for a shallow fellow with those who do not also observe that he is a devourer of bibles and epics. He is called a blind and silly optimist by those who overlook the fact that he has made a clean breast of more evil in himself and his countrymen than any other writer had admitted as existing; and his optimism is said to depend upon his championship of vulgarity and mediocrity. It is true that he seems to rely a great deal upon the "divine average." But, then, his standards are not so low. He is not such a facile leveler. His specimen of the average man, what he means by the average man, is Ulysses Grant, is Abraham Lincoln. Whitman adores America because she produces such men, and he clamors for shoals of them—poets, orators, scholars—of the same bulk and build and aplomb. He will not be satisfied till he sees a hundred million of such superb persons, such aristocrats walking these States. He is a democrat with an exorbitant thirst for distinction, of heroic

mold, elate with a vision of grandeurs and glories, of majesties and splendors—like every good democrat with a spark of imagination.

I have set forth some of the main points in Whitman's system of ideas, but I recall his warning: "Do not attempt to explain me; I cannot explain myself." And certainly his service to us is neither contained nor containable in an argument. He gives us the sustaining emotion which prevents argument from falling to pieces of its own dryness. He fulfills the promises and justifies the faith of democratic society in his own characteristic fashion, by being a great individual, by being a great poet. He chiefly serves our society as poets do: "We do not fathom you—we love you." He is a lover himself and the cause of love in others.

How do I know that he is a great poet? Not merely because such judges as Emerson, Tennyson and Swinburne have acknowledged his power. Not because he has achieved a wide international reputation and translations into French, Dutch, Danish, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. The great court of glory has pronounced unmistakeably in his favor; and this award fortifies, to be sure, the individual judgment. But there is another very simple test, which for some reason or other, is seldom applied to our contemporary verse. What is the purpose and the effect of great poetry—of Homer, the *Psalms*, *Beowulf*, the *Song of Roland*, the *Divine Comedy*, *Richard III*, *Paradise Lost*? It is to raise man in the midst of his common life above the level of his ordinary emotion by filling him with a sentiment of his importance as a moral being and of the greatness of his destiny. Does Whitman's poetry accomplish that end? It does, and it will continue to do so with increases of power as the depth and sweep of his book, its responses to a wide range of need, become familiar in the sort of daily exploration through a number of years, in dull times and crucial, which such a book can repay.

It is ungracious to say that one can measure the magnitude of Whitman by comparing him with his successors in the free verse movement; yet a word of comparison is almost unavoidable. The way to get at the matter is to ask, for example, whether the *Spoon River Anthology* of Mr. Masters fills one with a sentiment of one's importance as a moral being and of the greatness of one's destiny. Does there not fall over most of the figures in our late poetic renaissance "the shadow of great events from which they have shrunk?" Whitman still towers above his American successors as Pike's Peak towers above its foothills; and not merely by the height of his great argument and the lift of his passion but also—though they surpass him in small subtleties and superficial finish—by the main mastery of his instrument, the marshalling

of his phrases, the production of the poetic hypnosis, and the accent and winning freshness of his voice. I have spoken of his theme and the larger aspects of his emotion, and have not space to exhibit his surging cumulative effects:

Here the doings of men correspond with the broadcast doings of the  
day and night,  
Here is what moves in magnificent masses careless of particulars.

But I should like to leave in a few lines a taste of the quality of his voice responding first to simple rapture in the common loveliness of the natural world. Most of us ordinary people feel it when we are young and happy, but in Whitman it is a perennial incitement to benediction. No other American poet communicates so abundantly the sheer joy of living:

Beginning my studies the first step pleas'd me so much,  
The mere fact consciousness, these forms, the power of motion,  
The least insect or animal, the senses, eyesight, love,  
The first step I say awed me and pleas'd me so much,  
I have hardly gone and hardly wish'd to go any farther,  
But stop and loiter all the time to sing it in ecstatic songs.

Add this impression of a prairie sunset:

Pure luminous color fighting the silent shadows to the last.  
and that exquisite line:

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night.

Then for his note in compassion, read "Reconciliation," remembering that here is no feigned emotion, but the very spirit of the man bending above some Rebel soldier in the old Washington days—the bearded angel of spiritual Reconstruction:

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,  
Beautiful that war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be  
utterly lost,  
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly softly  
wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world;  
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,  
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin—I draw near,  
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the  
coffin.

Or read "A Sight in Camp in the Daybreak Gray and Dim," another picture of the dead soldier, ending with a swift mystical vision of his transfiguration by the love which passes understanding:

I think this face is the face of the Christ himself,  
Dead and divine and brother of all, and here again he lies.

There is more of the high pity and terror of war, more of the valor and tenderness that come straight from the magnanimous heart, in Whitman's battle chants and dirges than in all our other war poetry put together.

"In Homer and Shakespeare," says Whitman truly, one will find a "certain heroic ecstasy, which, or the suggestion of which, is never absent in the works of the masters." That heroic ecstasy is present in Whitman himself. There is not a page of him in which he does not impart it. The continuous miracle is that he manages to impart it with only a line here and there in the familiar grand style of the masters, and these remain, one suspects, by his inadvertence as in his salutation to a tawny headed warrior:

Now ending well in death the splendid fever of thy deeds,

Leaving behind thee a memory sweet to soldiers,  
Thou yieldest up thyself.

These are lines that the old masters would recognize as in their style; but the heroic ecstasy lives too in the new style of his own:

Fall behind me States!  
A man before all—myself, typical, before all,  
Give me the pay I have served for,  
Give me to sing of the great Idea, take all the rest.

Or consider his salute: "To Him That Was Crucified":

My spirit to yours dear brother,  
Do not mind because many sounding your name do not understand  
you,  
I do not sound your name, but I understand you.

In nothing does a man measure himself more decisively than in his judgment of other men. Whitman has an instinct and talent for recognizing the heroic in literature, in history, among his contemporaries. He recognizes it in Christ, in Lincoln, in the nameless crumpled corpse amid the debris of battle; and he responds to it with the adoration of a kindred spirit. This is a decisive test of his quality. This instinct keeps him near the central stream of our national life, an unperturbed and reassuring pilot in misty weather. In recognition of this virtue in him I choose for my last word this line of his:

The years straying toward infidelity he withholds by his steady faith.

# Gauguin

GEORGE SLOCOMBE (1894- )

George Edward Slocombe is an Englishman who has served British journalism for almost thirty years. He has been on the staffs of three London newspapers, the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Daily Herald*, and the *Evening Standard*. Like Vincent Sheean and John Gunther, he has spent a large part of his time in Europe as a foreign correspondent. Besides the customary autobiography, *The Tumult and the Shouting* (1936), the imposing list of his books includes three studies of the background of the present struggle, *Crisis in Europe* (1934), *The Dangerous Sea* (1936), and *A Mirror to Geneva* (1937); two popular long biographies, *White Plumed Henry, King of France* (1931) and *Don John of Austria: The Victor of Lepanto* (1935); a topical novel, *Romance of a Dictator* (1932); and a pleasant collection of travel sketches, *Paris in Profile* (1928).

*Rebels of Art* (1939) deals with the lives of thirteen painters, all Impressionists or Post-impressionists. Besides "Gauguin" there are short lives of Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Cézanne, Renoir, Sisley, Degas, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Modigliani, Utrillo, and Matisse. Slocombe says that the book is "biographical . . . rather than critical." Although he is a connoisseur of the Paris of yesterday and a dabbler in landscape painting, he does not pretend to be an experienced art critic.

Of course, the life of Paul Gauguin is too fascinating to be the private property of art critics. A successful business man who in mid-career leaves his job, his wife, and his children and wanders off to paint the noble savages of glamorous Tahiti—this is made-to-order movie material. W. Somerset Maugham turned it into a remarkable novel, *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), and countless lesser lights have "proved" that Gauguin was a sane genius and an utter madman, a sincere artist and a self-conscious charlatan, an honest champion of individualism and a monster of marital infidelity. In a preface to *Paul Gauguin's Intimate Journals* (1936) the painter's son recently defended his father against the last of these imputations and pleaded that the public bring the distorted picture into proper focus. Slocombe's short biography is a step in that direction.

THE MAN "WHOSE APPEARANCE MIGHT HAVE BEEN DANGEROUS" to the deluded Van Gogh at Arles, recovering, minus one ear, from his first fit of folly, was not less remarkable, either as a painter or as a personality,

From *Rebels of Art: Manet to Matisse*, by George Slocombe. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd., agents for the author.

than Van Gogh himself. Paul Gauguin had similarly reached a critical phase in his life: the phase which marked the end of his attempt to struggle with a civilization for which he had an increasing contempt, and which heralded his approaching flight to Tahiti. When they painted together at Arles, Van Gogh was thirty-five and Gauguin forty. Both sought escape from life in art, and ultimately in death. The one found it, self-procured, at thirty-seven; the other, failing miserably to end his own life, died as miserably when the diseases of civilization had overcome him at last, as they had already overcome the savage and simple people among whom he had hoped to find freedom and release.

Between the two men whom a similar destiny has associated in the history of French painting, there were far greater divergences than resemblances. Van Gogh was a mystic, at once fierce and humble, lucid and confused, austere and passionate. He inspired pity, sympathy and, on occasion, among people of instinctive simplicity or nobility of character, friendship, admiration and respect. Not a little of the emotion aroused by his painting is due to its revelation of a simple, noble and naïve personality. But Gauguin, on the other hand, provoked among his contemporaries not so much scorn and compassion as ridicule and detestation. He was intellectually and physically the superior of Van Gogh. He was strong, skilled in many crafts, arrogant, intolerant, witty and condescending. There was nothing naïve in the personality revealed by his works. They showed more imagination than those of Van Gogh, and less feeling. They were harsh, pitiless, and deliberate, intellectual rather than emotional. Yet like the painting of Van Gogh, they contained the same strong distinguishing marks of style, originality and personality, and also, it may be, the same premonitions of doom.

Eugene Henry Paul Gauguin was born in Paris on June 7, 1848. His father, Clovis Gauguin, was a French journalist attached to the liberal and republican newspaper, *Le National*. His mother, born Aline Marie Chazal, was of French and Peruvian stock, the daughter of Flora Tristan, a literary bluestocking of advanced political views, who claimed descent from an old and honorable Spanish family of Aragon. When Paul Gauguin was three years old the *coup d'état* of 1851 drove many French liberals into exile, and his father was among them. With his wife and two young children, Clovis Gauguin embarked on a ship bound for Peru, where his wife's uncle, Don Pio Tristan, already an octogenarian and destined to reach the age of 113, maintained a patriarchal household. Clovis died in the Straits of Magellan, but his widow and her children reached Lima safely. During the next four years they shared the picturesque disorder of an old Spanish house in the city founded by Pizarro, and in his years of poverty and struggle Gauguin



himself liked to recall the rich and brilliantly colored background of his childish years: the old house with its cool, dark rooms, the gracious figure of his mother, the terraced city, the burning skies, the patios, the heavily ornamented churches odorous with burning incense, the Negro girl who carried the family's prayer rug to mass and placed it on the cold flagstones of the church, and the Chinese servant.

In 1855 the mother and her children returned to France to claim the estate left by the defunct Clovis. Paul was sent to school in his father's native city of Orléans, first as a day pupil in a small boarding school, then to the local Jesuit seminary, and finally, for one year, as a student at the *lycée*. He was intended by his family to enter the navy. But at seventeen, after his year at the *lycée*, his impatience to escape from the bonds of family and the further discipline of a naval school proved too strong. In spite of the tearful protests of his mother, he embarked on board a merchant vessel, the *Luzitano*, bound for Rio de Janeiro, as officer-apprentice, and sailed for South America. Before the ship's departure, he confessed afterward, he had been to one of the sailor's bordels in Le Havre. On board, in spite of his youth and his small physique—he was seventeen and a half but looked no more than fifteen—he met a woman of thirty, Madame Aimée. "This charming Aimée, in spite of her thirty years, was quite pretty. Aimée made short work of my virtue. The moment was no doubt propitious, for I became a thorough rascal." On the return journey Gauguin encountered a German girl among the passengers, and their amorous rendezvous took place in the sail locker.

After nearly three years in the merchant service, Paul joined the French navy and served first as storekeeper, then as helmsman, and finally as able seaman on board the *Jérôme Napoléon*, commanded by the prince of that name. In April, 1871, he was released from service and returned to France to find his mother dead, and his sister Marie and himself confided to the care of a benevolent guardian, Paul Arosa, in whose house at Saint Cloud Madame Gauguin had spent her last five years. With the aid of his guardian, Paul Gauguin entered the employment of an exchange broker named Bertin, whose offices were in the rue Lafitte. And there for the next eleven years Gauguin remained, becoming an exemplary, trusted and highly successful broker's clerk, expert in all the technique of the Paris Bourse, earning in one successful year as much as forty thousand francs, then considered a very handsome income; moreover, a model husband, who, if not above reproach, was at least discreet in his infidelities, and the father of four children. And with this, the career of an obscure if intelligent and enterprising young broker might have been closed, if he had not, in the meantime, been

tempted by the same demoniac influences which beset Van Gogh, the demon of painting.

The fatal impulse came to him late enough in the life of a man who had seen the world at seventeen. He was twenty-seven before he touched a brush. Other successful exchange brokers lived all their lives without yielding for a moment to a fleeting interest in the world of art. And between the profession of painter and the profession of financier there was, in the sharply defined social hierarchy of France in the eighteenth-seventies, an even greater gulf than now. In 1875, however, Gauguin had met the painter Camille Pissarro at the house of his friend and benefactor, Paul Arosa. In his youth Pissarro had struggled against his parents' intention to give him a career in commerce. He had come, like the child Paul Gauguin, from a remote land across the Atlantic. He was practically self-taught, and owed little or nothing of his art to the teaching of academies. He believed in free expression of the creative urge, and in drawing and painting directly from nature. Unlike many professional artists, he saw nothing ridiculous, naïve or pretentious in the efforts of an exchange broker to draw, paint, carve wood, or decorate pottery. He encouraged the young Gauguin in all these activities.

Impetuously, with the mixture of ardor and shrewdness he showed in all things, whether love, business or art, Gauguin began to paint. On Sundays and holidays he followed the still derided Impressionists out to the banks of the Seine or the green fringes of the forests around Paris. In 1876 he exhibited a landscape at the Salon. In 1880 he showed a number of works, all evidently inspired by Pissarro, at the Impressionists' exhibition in the rue des Pyramides. In 1881, a study of a nude exhibited by him provoked the critic J. K. Huysmans to almost dithyrambic praise, in which Gauguin was classed above Courbet and on a level with Rembrandt. The same writer disapproved strongly, however, of the Pissarro influence still manifest in the landscapes which accompanied this nude.

Gauguin was now living in comparative affluence. He could spend the then considerable sum of fifteen thousand francs on acquiring a collection of the works of Pissarro, Cézanne, Renoir, Manet, Monet and Sisley. He was installed in a large and comfortable house in the rue Carcel. He had an assured position on the Bourse. And he was related, through his Danish wife, Mette Sophie Gad, to the solid Lutheran bourgeoisie of Copenhagen. Suddenly, on a January day in 1883, the impulse which had made him, at seventeen, renounce the career of naval officer for the humble position of apprentice in the merchant marine, decided him, at thirty-five, to abandon the security of the Bourse for the hideous in-

security of art. "Henceforth," he said grandiosely, "I shall paint not only on Sundays, but every day of the week."

Gauguin was at this time at the height of his physical and mental powers. He was tall, well-built, muscular and elegantly dressed, and carried himself with a haughty and arrogant air which seemed to lend credit to his own claim to be descended from the Borgias of Aragon. His hair was dark and thick, and fell back sleekly over a strange head with too prominent, heavy-lidded eyes, a great nose like an eagle's beak, high, flat cheekbones and a harsh and scornful mouth. His manner was dogmatic and authoritative. His movements were abrupt and restless and betrayed a physical energy clamoring for release. He was incessantly in movement. Idleness chafed him, and his hands were never still. He talked eloquently, and when his face became animated it had an eager, attractive and even noble expression. But in repose his eyes glittered strangely, and their piercing and side-long glance seemed to Van Gogh that of a man from the planet Mars. Gauguin himself took a melancholy pride in boasting of his "evil eye." By an unlucky chance, he confessed, several men who had come into contact with him had become mad. "The two brothers Van Gogh among them, and some people in malice, and others in innocence, have attributed their madness to me."

But in spite of his outbursts of temper, his affectations of superiority, his harsh and contemptuous manners and speech, Gauguin was at heart an incurable romantic, capable of great generosity, sentiment and even tenderness. He spent hours in carving and painting walking sticks for the adolescent Manzana, one of the sons of Camille Pissarro, and the two frequently sketched together. He nursed his own son Clovis with tenderness and devotion. And in his last hours, in spite of his pain and exhaustion, he spoke calmly and gently of his vision of art to a Protestant missionary who visited him in the Marquesas.

Scarcely two years after his decision to abandon the Bourse, the prosperous position which Gauguin had established for himself and his family in the eleven years he spent in the broker's office had vanished. His house had been vacated, his pictures and furniture sold, and he had left Paris for the cheaper town of Rouen, all to no avail. In 1885, when he had no money to buy food for his family or colors and canvases for himself, he decided to leave France for Denmark, where he hoped his wife's prosperous relations would come to their aid. In Copenhagen, however, he was rapidly and bitterly disillusioned. He had gone there with a commission from a Rouen manufacturer to sell sailcloth and tarpaulins, but he found no purchasers. His own attitude in discussing business was scarcely encouraging. He threw a glass of water in the face of one Dane who politely but persistently refused his wares. He

jibed at the prudishness and the provincial outlook of his wife's family, and replied to their censure and criticism with insults. Finally he left them in anger and returned to Paris, taking with him his eldest son, Clovis. His wife, Mette, with his eldest daughter, Aline, and her three younger brothers, remained in Copenhagen, and Mette contributed to their support by translating French *feuilletons* for the Danish newspapers.

Now began the most unhappy phase of Gauguin's life. He and his son shared a miserable room in Paris, not far from the house in the rue des Fourneaux in which he had lived in his years of plenty. Here, quite literally, they starved. He could not paint. He slept on wooden planks, wrapped in a traveling rug. His son, now in the early stages of consumption, slept on the solitary bed. When neither had even dry bread to eat, the father found work as a bill-poster at the Gare du Nord, at three francs fifty centimes a day, and out of the pittance he earned at this and at other casual jobs, managed to pay for the son's board until he fell sick himself and was taken to a hospital.

Eight years later, in the book he dedicated to his favorite child, Aline, Gauguin described some of these privations. "I have known the depths of poverty, which is to be hungry and cold and all that goes with it. But this is nothing, or next to nothing. One gets the habit. The terrible thing in poverty is that it prevents one from working, from developing one's intellectual faculties . . . It is true that suffering sharpens genius. But too much suffering kills."

Yet his pride sharpened his energy even more than did his hardships. When he had the material to paint with, he worked feverishly. At the eighth exhibition of the Impressionists in 1886 he exhibited no fewer than nineteen canvases. They were still strongly influenced by his friend Pissarro, but the beginnings of an individual style and personality could be seen. A few months later he left Paris for Pont-Aven in Brittany, and there spent the spring and summer of 1886. Pont-Aven was then the center of a school of landscape painters, as Barbizon had been the haunt of an earlier generation. There were two inns in the village, and each inn had its coterie of artists. One, that kept by the Mère Gloanec, was chiefly frequented by the students of the Beaux Arts. Gauguin, on his first visit, painted and drank alone, regarding the academy painters with an aversion which was cordially returned.

On his second visit, two years later, his personality, his tricks of speech and dress, and the exotic tradition which was beginning to grow up around him attracted the curiosity of a number of younger men, and he became in some sort the leader of a cult. But in 1886 he was still a solitary. He had gone to Brittany partly in response to the suggestion of

Pissarro, partly because in that region of France the inhabitants were still simple and even primitive, the landscape was in part wild and desolate, living was inexpensive, and the sophisticated civilization of Paris was remote.

When autumn came he returned to Paris and met Vincent and Theodore Van Gogh. He had not yet painted the *Yellow Christ*, *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, the *Calvary*, the *Garden of Olives* or any others of the Breton pictures afterward celebrated, but there was enough in his painting, and still more in his talking and thinking, to provoke the admiration of both brothers. In the winter of 1886, obsessed as much by the need to solve the economic problem of living cheaply and securing freedom to paint, as by the desire to rediscover the land of sun and facile content in which he had lived as a child, he decided to leave Paris for the West Indian island of Martinique. But he needed money for the journey, and more money to satisfy his simple needs on the island. When he had sold all he possessed in Paris, he was still almost penniless. But the Panama Canal was being dug, and laborers were being recruited for the digging. With another penurious artist, Charles Laval, Gauguin offered himself and was engaged. His wife came from Copenhagen and removed the sickly son Clovis, who did not long survive the journey. And the two painters embarked for Panama.

They worked under a tropical sun and under diluvian rains from half-past five in the morning until six o'clock at night, and often sleep was impossible for the bites of mosquitoes. After some months, work was interrupted on orders from Paris, and the laborers were discharged. Gauguin and Laval, with their scanty savings, embarked for Martinique, where Laval fell sick with malaria and would have committed suicide if Gauguin had not prevented him. At the end of 1887, a year after his departure, Gauguin returned to Paris, at the end of his resources, disillusioned, yellow and exhausted by dysentery and malaria. He found refuge in Montparnasse, in the house of Émile Schuffenecker, an old friend and former colleague in the office of the broker Bertin, who had followed Gauguin's example and abandoned the Bourse for painting. The hospitable Schuffenecker shared his studio with his friend, but soon all Gauguin's arrogance had returned, and one day when Theodore Van Gogh called at the house to look at Gauguin's recent work, the guest ushered the visitor into the studio and shut the door in the face of his host.

Theodore sold some of his canvases, and Gauguin also made a little money about this time with the help of the potter Chaplet, who taught him the technique of ceramics and gave him the use of his furnace. With these resources, Gauguin went to Copenhagen, met with a frigid

reception from his wife Mette and her brothers, and returned almost immediately to France. He spent the summer of 1888 at the Hôtel Gloanec in Pont-Aven, and in the autumn, yielding to the vehement solicitations of Vincent Van Gogh, joined the Dutchman at Arles. Van Gogh had arrived in Arles in the spring of the same year and was painting in a fever of ecstasy at the unfamiliar richness of the colored scene, the orange sun going down at evening against a sky of emerald, the warmth and freedom of the South. He had sent Gauguin a self-portrait, and Gauguin had replied in kind, awakening the eager sympathy of Van Gogh by his melancholy aspect and air of debility. His portrait suggested to Vincent that of "a prisoner," and he replied with a fresh invitation to join him in his "House of Light," the yellow house in Arles with its red-tiled floors, whitewashed walls, and the pictures of the sunflowers hung ready to welcome the honored guest.

Gauguin reached Arles in October, and on Christmas Day the incipient madness of Van Gogh, exasperated by the irregularities of his life, by the frequent arguments with Gauguin, by exposure to the sun at noon, by overwork, periodical phases of starvation and abuse of alcohol, ended in the inevitable tragedy. As told in the previous chapter, Van Gogh threatened Gauguin's life with a razor, and when detected, turned the weapon against himself, cut off his ear, and took it, carefully wrapped up, as a Christmas gift to a girl in the town brothel.

Gauguin returned to Paris, with his outward mask of frigid and disdainful calm unmoved by the experience, but inwardly shaken and disconcerted. He had a Latin command of his emotions. He could be ruthless and egoistic when he liked, but at heart he was good-natured and sentimental. He had a certain respect for the art of Van Gogh, but none for his queer mixture of religion, philosophy and aesthetics. And he had retained from his childhood in Lima, where many of the vast patriarchal and inbred Spanish families kept the domestic half-wit in chains on the terrace roof, a genial contempt for lunacy. Deliberately he washed his hands of Van Gogh. He had, he said, in reply to an invitation from Theodore to help in organizing a posthumous exhibition of the works of his brother, no use for demented artists. The rebuff was intended more as a *boutade* than as a serious attitude. It issued from a painter who had himself been accused by his wife's family of criminal folly, and had been as hardly used by the world as poor Vincent himself.

In the spring which followed the drama at Arles, Gauguin was represented by seventeen paintings and lithographs at the exhibition organized in the Café Volpini in Paris by the Impressionists and his modest school of Synthetists. He returned to Brittany, and now installed himself and his friends in an inn on the seashore at Pouldu kept by Mlle.

Marie Henry. The walls and ceilings of the public rooms of the inn were soon covered by the Synthetists with paintings, decorations, drawings and inscriptions, and for many years after the death of Gauguin they aroused the curiosity, derision or admiration of visitors, until some enterprising dealer arrived at the height of the posthumous cult of Gauguin, identified the works of the master, purchased them from their owner, and removed them, plaster and all, from the inn of the hospitable Mademoiselle Marie.

Gauguin was still without resources, but he had found disciples in plenty—Paul Sérusier, Charles Laval, Armand Séguin, Paul Émile Colin and several others—and at least one friend and supporter in the person of a Dutchman called Meyer de Haan, who had come to him with a letter of recommendation from Pissarro. De Haan was a red-haired dwarf, hunchbacked, ugly, and sickly-looking, but an excellent painter. Like Pissarro and Gauguin, he had abandoned commerce for art. He had been a biscuit manufacturer in Amsterdam, and when the temptation to paint proved too strong for him, he handed over his business to his brothers in return for a monthly allowance of three hundred francs. The modest income set him apart from the other painters at Pouldu as a man of means. Willingly he aided Gauguin out of his own comparatively well-filled purse. He paid his board at the inn, kept him supplied with wine and tobacco, and listened approvingly to his discourses on the new synthesis in art. He learned from Gauguin to paint without a model, to contemplate a *motif* long and observantly, to make very complete notes of its characteristics, and to construct or reconstruct the scene afterward on the canvas, from memory. A picture, Gauguin insisted, should be completely realized in the mind of the painter before he began to paint it.

He remained at Pouldu for a year, and toward the end of 1890 he returned to Paris with a considerable number of canvases. After living for some weeks in a small hotel room in the rue Delambre, near the junction of the Boulevard Raspail and the Boulevard Montparnasse, he found a new sympathizer and accepted the hospitality of his studio: Daniel de Monfreid, destined to prove the most loyal, generous and devoted of all Gauguin's friends. In this, the first year of the last decade of the nineteenth century, Paris was full of new movements in literature and in art. Verlaine slumbered over an empty glass of absinthe at the marble-topped tables of the Latin Quarter. The Greek poet, Jean Moréas, and the Symbolists, led by Stéphane Mallarmé, met nightly in the Café Voltaire near the Odéon, and Gauguin made a portrait of the poet. The cult of the Symbolists responded to the vague tendency toward symbolism visible, then and later, in Gauguin's own work, and

he readily adapted their doctrine to his own philosophy of life and art: always ready, characteristically, to repudiate them when there seemed a danger that he would become their prisoner.

It may be that Van Gogh, with his shrewd, other-earthly sensitiveness to persons and to places, had pronounced the true judgment on Gauguin when he said of his self-portrait in Brittany that in it he seemed a prisoner. His life until now had been a series of imprisonments and of escapes. It is true that the prisons were self-created, prisons only to a monstrous and expanding ego. And each escape seemed to be only toward a new prison. The student had escaped from school to the open sea. But the open sea had proved no larger than the hull of a ship. The sailor had become economically independent, but had assumed the ties of marriage and parenthood, and the even stronger ties of financial success. The financier had escaped into art only to discover that a painter, too, was the slave of economic necessity, and the victim of social and academic convention. The Parisian had shaken off civilization to labor like a convict under the torrid skies of Panama, and to burn in the malarian fevers of Martinique. Even in Brittany, with the admiration of a small group of disciples ringing in his ears, and a people simple, primitive and mysterious to paint, Gauguin had found neither freedom, ecstasy nor peace. And he desired all three, and jointly: social and economic freedom, the liberty to live and to work in reasonable comfort, for he was no idler, no dreamer of an Hesperidean indolence; a complete sexual freedom, to be found, he imagined, only among primitive tribes dwelling in a semitropical paradise; and the peace which comes of these.

Hence recurred to him ever more insistently the dream inspired by his brief childish sojourn in far Peru, the dream of a renunciation of European civilization, of a return to the savagery urged by Jean Jacques Rousseau. He had reached the dangerous forties. A generation earlier, when he was a youth on board the *Luzitano*, the officer of the watch had described his own experience as a cabin boy marooned for two years on an island in the South Pacific. Gauguin had never forgotten the story. And while in Brittany he wrote to his wife in Copenhagen: "May the day soon come when I shall go and bury myself in the forests of an island in the South Seas, and live there a life of ecstasy, calm and art. Surrounded by a new family, and far from this European struggle for money."

He also wrote to her: "I am an artist; I am a great artist and I know it. It is because I know this that I have endured so much suffering to follow my own bent. Otherwise I should consider myself a brigand, as of course I am in the eyes of many people. What grieves me most is



not so much my poverty as the perpetual obstacles which poverty places in the way of my art . . ." But one night in Paris he spoke less grandiloquently to his friend, the poet Charles Morice. Weeping, and covering his face with his hands, he confessed: "I have never been so unhappy. I have not been able to maintain both my family and my ideas. I have not even been able, until now, to maintain my ideas alone. . . ."

Nevertheless, in public he spoke of his projects with dignity, with a calm and majestic assurance which aroused admiration and envy among his hearers. He had decided to renounce European civilization and its arts for the primitive arts of the Polynesians. In a little café in the rue de la Gaite, today appropriately named *Aux Îles Marquises*, to an audience of negligently dressed painters and writers and their models or mistresses, Gauguin proclaimed:

"Primitive art emerges from the soul and adapts nature to its own purposes. So-called refined art issues from sensuality and is subservient to nature. Nature is the servant of the one and the mistress of the other. But the handmaid cannot forget her origin. She degrades the mind which adores her. It is thus that we have fallen into the abominable blunder of naturalism. Naturalism began with the Greeks of Pericles. Since then, the only more or less great artists have been those who have reacted against this error. . . . The real, the true art is the pure intellectual art, the art of the primitives, the most skilled of all—in other words, the art of Egypt. There lies the principle. In our present poverty there is no possible way to health except in a frank and deliberate return to this first principle."

His own return to a primitive existence could not have been more frank and deliberate. "I am going to live," he repeated over and over again to his friends, Charles Morice and Daniel de Monfreid, "among the savages." His friends aided him to realize the sum of money, ten thousand francs, which he needed for the journey to Tahiti. They created that current of rumor and curiosity without which no unknown artist can achieve the conquest of public opinion in Paris. Octave Mirbeau, already a warm champion of the Impressionists, came to Gauguin's support with an enthusiastic article in the *Echo de Paris*, and a large crowd assembled at the sale of Gauguin's works held at the Hôtel Drouot in February, 1891. The sale yielded him 9,860 francs. A few weeks later he sailed for the South Pacific.

Now began the last, the most celebrated, the most fruitful phase of his life. He was nearly forty-three years old. He had been in turn sailor, boursier, painter; a child in Peru, an adventurous youth at sea, a *bourgeois père de famille* in Paris, an enfranchised amorist in Brittany.

He was now turning his back on civilization, a primitive man in search of savage nature. At first, as was inevitable, he was bitterly disillusioned. Tahiti greeted him, significantly enough, with the burial rites of the last of the Polynesian monarchs, Pomare the Fifth, the last king of Tahiti, a warning that he had come too late to find a native race living in freedom and independence. Before he left Paris he had been invested by a friendly official of the administration of the Beaux Arts with a vague artistic mission, but the governor of Tahiti looked on him with suspicion, taking him for a spy. Papeete, the capital, was merely an outpost of Europe, and worse than Europe in its colonial snobbery. A few months after his arrival he left Papeete for the interior of the island and settled in a village twenty-five miles distant, where he spent the remainder of his money on building himself a house, and on satisfying the caprices of his mistress, Tehura, a Tahitian girl of thirteen.

At last he began to realize his dream of a primitive existence. "My life is that of a naked savage," he wrote to Daniel de Monfreid less than a year after his landing in Tahiti. He went barefoot and nude to the waist. He had begun to learn to draw, he said, and to take copious notes for future paintings. Finally he had begun a canvas, an angel with yellow wings indicating to two Tahitian women a native madonna with the infant Christ, against a background of dark mauve and emerald. Nevertheless, he was not free from anxieties. He was again without resources. His heart was giving signs of weakness. He had had an internal hemorrhage, and had vomited blood. When he had been in the colony eleven months he was already wondering whether he should not demand his repatriation by the authorities on the ground of poverty, but a few weeks later, when he was on his way to interview the governor, the captain of a blackbirding schooner slipped four hundred francs in his hand and told him to repay the loan with a picture. "All my life has been like that," he wrote to his friend Daniel de Monfreid later. "I go to the very edge of the precipice, but I do not fall. When the Van Gogh of Goupil's [Theodore] went mad, I was finished. Nevertheless, I picked myself up again. It forced me to get going."

Meanwhile he painted feverishly when he had materials with which to paint, and at last the authentic note of personality was in his work. It now derived from many sources, but no longer from a solitary inspiration. The bizarre religious symbolism of the Brittany pictures had given place to a more pagan note; the range of colors had become richer and more varied, the drawing more sure, the decorative quality more evident. His Tahitian pictures were utterly unlike anything of the kind Paris had seen before. The figures of the men and women had

a sad, hieratic quality, and the pictures were like cartoons for tapestries. Monfreid, to whom Gauguin had sent a roll of unmounted canvases by the hands of a friendly artillery officer returning to France on leave, praised them warmly. Degas was enthusiastic, and bought a picture. Others were sent to Gauguin's wife in Copenhagen, and some were sold, but Mette retained the purchase money for household expenses.

At the end of December, 1892, Gauguin reported that he was in the most complete misery. He had but fifty francs in his possession and nothing in view. "The stoutest ropes give way when they are strained too long . . . and I do not grow any younger . . . I in my turn must give up painting, since it cannot keep me alive. I left Paris after a success, a small one, but still a success. In eighteen months I have not seen a sou from my painting, which means that I have sold even less than before."

Three months later he wrote that he would soon be a father again. "Here no harm is done . . . for you know in Tahiti the finest gift that one can offer is a child. Hence the fate of this one gives me no anxiety." And learning from his friend de Monfreid that he had resumed painting, he counseled him, "Go boldly your own way and be audacious. Go crazy for two hours a day and leave wisdom to Bouguereau."

In May, 1893, he had been in Tahiti for two years, of which some months had been wasted, but during which nevertheless he had produced "sixty-six canvases, more or less good, and some ultra-primitive sculpture. It is enough for one man." On the third of the following August he landed in Marseilles with four francs in his pockets. The voyage had been disagreeable, the steamer crowded with troops, the weather inclement, and the heat in the Red Sea so great that three men died of it. But Gauguin was in good spirits. He telegraphed to his friend for money to pay his fare to Paris and a few days later arrived at de Monfreid's studio in Paris. He found that his Tahitian works had had but a *succès d'estime* in Copenhagen. But his luck—that tutelary divinity which he believed had so repeatedly brought him back from the edge of the abyss—was with him again. An uncle in Orléans, Isidore, "had the wit to die," and his small fortune would aid Gauguin to re-establish himself and organize his exhibition. It would not amount to more than 10,000 francs, but at that moment such a sum meant his salvation. He wrote to his wife to join him in Paris, paid his debts, traveled for a week in Belgium and admired the Memlings in the Museum of Bruges, and returned to Paris to persuade Durand-Ruel, who twenty years earlier had magnificently championed the Impressionists, to open the doors of his gallery to an exhibition of his Tahitian works.

The exhibition was held in November. It attracted a certain amount

of attention. The poet Charles Morice had written an introduction to the catalogue in which the adventurous life of the artist was described in vivid terms. Stéphane Mallarmé, the leader of the Symbolists, said enthusiastically of the Tahitian pictures: "It is extraordinary that so much mystery can be contained in so much brilliance." Degas, Renoir and Pissarro admired the rich decorative patterns of the canvases, although they privately considered the mythological content of them as unimportant. But the public in general, led by the critics and dealers, who had only just begun to be reconciled to Gauguin's Brittany manner, was repelled by his Tahitian pictures and sculptures. His extravagances in color, deliberately designed to suggest the tropical richness of the southern archipelago, were found revolting. An Englishwoman exclaimed in horror at a red dog which figured in the scene entitled *Arearea*.

Meanwhile Gauguin's other extravagances began to attract attention. Soon after his return to Paris and the posthumous windfall from Uncle Isidore he had acquired a large studio in the rue Vercingetorix, and a Javanese mistress. He had painted the walls a lemon yellow, and painted decorations on the windows, on which he had written, in Maori: *Te Faruru*, "Here one makes love." A collection of savage weapons and masks, and of his own wood carvings, hung on the walls. A monkey huddled near the studio stove. And in this exotic interior Gauguin, assisted by his half-nude Javanese girl, Annah, entertained his friends among the artists and writers of Paris. Gauguin himself was even more exotic-looking than his surroundings. He wore a long blue frock coat with mother-of-pearl buttons, a blue waist-coat with an embroidered collar, and yellow trousers. His large gray felt hat was decorated with a blue ribbon. He wore white gloves, and carried a walking stick carved by himself, with a fine pearl inset in the handle.

The adventure with Annah ended disastrously. In the spring which followed his exhibition, Gauguin returned to Brittany, and the Javanese accompanied him. On the quay at Concarneau a group of sailors jeered at his fantastic blue and yellow costume, his monkey, and the brilliant orange robe of the Javanese girl. Gauguin knocked down the foulest-mouthed of the sailors, and was disposing of the others with the skill of a trained boxer when one of them approached him from the rear and kicked him in the ankle with his heavy sabot. The bone broke, and Gauguin fainted. When he recovered and was carried to the inn Annah had gone. She fled to Paris, took everything from Gauguin's studio that was portable and of value, and was never seen again.

The broken ankle kept him prostrate for many weeks. The bones were badly set, and he limped for the rest of his life. In the autumn of

1894 he wrote that he had lost all courage as the result of his suffering. He had always suffered from insomnia, and now his nights were not only sleepless but racked with pain. He had lost four months of painting and had spent his legacy. He decided to return, once for all, to the South Seas. He would return to Paris in December to sell everything he had at any price it would fetch. Then he could end his days "free and tranquil, without thought for the morrow and the eternal struggle against stupidity."

The sale of his works took place at the Hôtel Drouot on February 18, 1895. Among the visitors to the exotic studio in the rue Vercingetorix had been the poet and playwright Strindberg, and to him Gauguin now appealed to write the preface to the catalogue of his sale. Strindberg declined in a *réponse raisonnée* in which he declared that he neither liked nor understood the art of Gauguin. Gauguin wrote a sarcastic reply to the letter, and printed both letter and reply at the head of his catalogue. But notwithstanding this verbal duel and the interest it aroused, the sale yielded Gauguin only a few thousand francs. With these the painter embarked for the second time for Tahiti. Before he sailed he traveled to Copenhagen and there urged his wife to accompany him with their five children. But Mette coldly refused to join him in so risky an adventure. They parted without a reconciliation, and Gauguin never saw her again. The son whom he had nursed in Paris died of tuberculosis at twenty-one, and Aline, his eldest daughter and the favorite among his children, did not long survive him.

Tahiti received him like a returned prodigal. Outside Papeete, the over-Europeanized capital, where he halted only long enough to take stock of his situation and make his plans for the future, the primitive island accepted his return without astonishment. The Tahitian girl Tehura, who had been his mistress, had married since his departure, but for several nights she left her husband's hut to share that of the white man. Moreover, other girls soon consoled him for her loss. He had spent the major part of the money realized by his sale in Paris on building a large cabin in the native style. It stood by the roadside, shaded by large coconut palms, and behind it rose a purple mountain. It resembled "an enormous birdcage," with walls of plaited bamboo and roof thatched with coconut-palm matting. The hut was divided into two parts with the curtains from the studio in the rue Vercingetorix. In one part, cool and dark, Gauguin slept. The other, furnished with a high window, an old Persian rug, drawings and fragments of wood-carving, Gauguin used for his studio. On each side of the entrance stood the trunk of a coconut palm carved by Gauguin in the image of a native god.

Nevertheless, he was long in resuming his painting. His injured ankle still pained him. He had two wounds which would not heal, a symptom of the malady he had caught in Paris. He had spent all his money, and owed a thousand francs besides. He and his new *vahine* lived on a meager one hundred francs a month, but he needed money to pay the debt on his house, and to purchase colors. He avowed to Monfreid that he was completely defeated and at the end of his resources, morally and physically. "Many people find help because they are weak and they know how to beg. But I have never known a protector, because I am thought to be strong and, moreover, am too proud. But now I am prostrate, weak, half worn out by the merciless struggle that I have undertaken, and I go down on my knees and cast away all pride. I am nothing but a failure. . . ."

Yet he had just painted a canvas which in color he had never yet approached for "gravity and sonority." It showed a native queen, nude and lying on a green rug. A maidservant gathered fruits from a tree, a dog kept guard, a pair of doves cooed, two old men talked under a great tree, the tree of knowledge.

His second sojourn on the island of Tahiti lasted six years, and it was for the painter in many respects "the foolish, sad and wicked adventure" which in a mood of despondency he confessed it to be. His health grew steadily worse. His financial situation became desperate, relieved only from time to time by remittances of a few hundred francs when Monfreid succeeded in selling a picture. Letters from his other friends in France, or from his family in Copenhagen were more and more rare. In 1897 he learned of the death of his daughter Aline. In February, 1898, he confessed to Monfreid that he had tried to poison himself with arsenic, but had taken too great a quantity, and had suffered terribly from the after-effects. Before his attempt at suicide he painted the vast, enigmatical composition entitled *D'où venons nous? Que sommes nous? Où allons nous?* ("Whence do we come? What are we? Whither are we going?") "I wished, before I died," he explained, "to paint a great canvas which I had in mind, and during a whole month I worked on it night and day in an extraordinary fever. It certainly is not a picture done like a Puvis de Chavannes—studies from nature, then a preparatory cartoon. It has all been painted at one go, with the brush, on a piece of sacking full of knots and lumps. It will be said that it is hastily done, unfinished. But I have put into it all my strength, and so much melancholy passion in these terrible circumstances, and so clear a vision, that the haste is not evident and the life surges out of it."

This great allegorical decoration remained during the months which

followed his attempt at suicide his sole consolation. It had absorbed all his strength, but at least he could look at it ceaselessly and, as he confessed, with admiration, although the more he looked at it the more he realized the "enormous mathematical errors" he had committed in it, errors which he would on no account correct. And this led him to a shrewd observation. "Have you noticed that when you recopy a sketch which satisfied you in the minute or the second of inspiration when you made it, you never succeed in making more than an inferior copy, especially if you correct the proportions, the errors which your reason tells you it contains. I sometimes hear it said that an arm is too long. Yes! and No! But particularly No! since by lengthening the arm you leave the realm of verisimilitude for that of fable, which is not at all a bad thing. Of course the whole work must reveal the same style, the same intention. But if Bouguereau were to make an arm too long, what would remain to him, since his vision, his artistic intentions, are limited to this, this stupid precision which rivets us to the chains of material reality?"

When Gauguin wrote this he was reduced to living on guavas, mangoes and water, varied by fresh-water shrimps which his *vahine* occasionally caught in a stream. The bank from which he had borrowed money to build his house demanded reimbursement. He had heard no word from agents in Paris who had sold his pictures but withheld the money. His wife in Copenhagen had also sold his canvases but remained deaf to his appeals for aid. "In the event of my sudden death," he had written to Monfreid when he first contemplated suicide, "I beg you to keep all the canvases I have stored with you: my family will even then have had too many." A few months after his attempt on his life he swallowed his pride and begged work of any sort from the authorities in Papeete. He was fifty years old.

They gave him a desk in the drawing office of the Department of Public Works at six francs a day. It meant the end of his painting for the time being, and the end of his wild life. But it kept him from starvation, prevented him from having to borrow further and enabled him even to pay off the sums he owed for food and medicine. "Ah, if I were only sure of being able to sell my pictures at two hundred francs each as soon as they are painted! I should be happy and sufficiently rich to live comfortably at Tahiti." But in the absence of any such fantastic assurance he could only learn humility as a little *fonctionnaire*, look long and lovingly at his allegory, on its roll of sacking fourteen feet long and six feet high, and spare enough out of his meager salary to pay a photographer in Papeete to photograph it.

At the beginning of 1899 he received a little money from the sale of

his pictures and could return to his own house on the island, eager, in spite of his ill health, his eczema and his lame foot, to resume his painting, and planning to grow irises, dahlias, nasturtiums and sunflowers in the garden he had made with the seeds sent by Monfreid. He found the house "in a deplorable state." Rats had made ravages in the thatched roof, the rain had spoiled his rugs, the ants had eaten his notes and drawings and a large unfinished canvas. He announced that a new doctor at the hospital had taken a liking to him and had promised to cure him, but it would be a long process. "Why did I not die last year? I will soon be fifty-one years old, worn out, exhausted in all my body; and my sight grows worse every day; hence the strength required by this incessant struggle now fails me." Nevertheless, he found some consolation in his misery. Another child was born to his *vahine*, a son, "lovely like all the fruits of adultery," and would, he hoped, give him a new interest in life. The flowers had sprung up around his cabin, and had made it a veritable Eden. He had even hoped to have fresh vegetables from his garden, but water was lacking; a well had been partly dug but could not be finished for lack of money.

The "sad and evil adventure" continued. His health declined. His resources, never sufficient to give him more than a hand-to-mouth existence, dwindled to nothing. One monthly steamer out of three brought him a few hundred francs, which lasted but between one mail and the next, and for the two months which followed he waited in vain, the most melancholy remittance man alive. His pain, his poverty, his friendlessness, his hostile relations, his lack of painting materials, all exasperated him. He had grown weary of the island. It was spoilt by civilization. The natives pilfered his meager stores of provisions, and he fancied that the local magistrate secretly abetted them. He wrote furious letters to the colony's newspaper, insulting and denouncing the official in terms which in France would have brought him a challenge to a duel. Nothing happened, and he abandoned the struggle, sick and contemptuous of the cowardice of these colonials.

In his dejection he could not even paint. He had but three yards of canvas left, and hardly any colors, "not a miligramme of vermilion, my favorite." Yet in his poverty he had the bitter consolation from the painter Maurice Denis that Degas and Rouart were eager to buy his pictures. The dealers speculated on his rising reputation and his canvases fetched handsome prices at auction: all of which bewildered and exasperated him, since they brought him practically nothing, and he more than once told Daniel de Monfreid not to reject the most modest offers for his work. In his rage at his enforced idleness, and the fear of captivity which eleven years earlier Van Gogh had sensed in him, he



founded a satirical journal, *Le Sourire*, wrote and printed it by hand, illustrated it with woodcuts, and added fifty francs a month to his income in this way. But the colonists contented themselves "with passing the same copy from hand to hand." Few copies were sold. And after a few issues Gauguin abandoned it with little more than the satisfaction that he had made a few more political enemies.

In August, 1901, he sold his little plantation in Tahiti and embarked for the smaller island of La Dominique, in the Marquesas. There, he had heard, life was simpler and cheaper. Models were easier to come by, whereas in Tahiti the natives in recent years posed reluctantly. At first his dreams seem to have been realized. The name of the island in Maori was *Hiva Oa*, the Great Cliff. There was no semicivilized town, as on the island of Tahiti. There were fewer whites: a friendly American storekeeper, a Protestant missionary, a few French functionaries and the priests of a Catholic mission. The mission owned most of the land on the island, and Gauguin with difficulty persuaded the priests to sell him enough to build a house, and plant a garden. Once installed among his own possessions, his native optimism was aroused. "From the standpoint of a painter," he wrote, "it is admirable. Marvelous models. . . . Here poetry emerges unaided from the landscape, and it is only necessary to daydream, brush in hand, in order to suggest it. I only ask for two years of health, and not too many worries over money, which nowadays affect my nerves too strongly, to reach a certain maturity in my art. I feel that in art I am right, but shall I have the strength to express myself sufficiently? In any case I shall have done my duty, and if my works do not survive there will always remain the memory of an artist who liberated painting from many of the academic fetters of earlier days and from the fetters of symbolism (another kind of sentimentality)."

Gauguin's hut was in the middle of the village of Atuana, but so closely surrounded and shaded by trees that he lived in a kind of isolation. It was built more solidly than his previous dwelling, as if he had intended it to become his tomb. Wooden piles six feet high saved it from destruction in the cyclone and tidal wave which swept inland from the sea, and the painter, lying in his hammock, could hear the coconut palms swaying gently far above his head. Life was cheap on the island. A chicken cost only sixty centimes, a suckling pig six or seven francs. The islanders were of a higher type than those on Tahiti, less spoilt by contact with European civilization. In spite of the reforming zeal of the missionaries, many of the younger women went nude to the waist. The Marquesan girls had a golden skin, large and lustrous

eyes, wide shoulders, firm breasts and narrow hips, and legs which formed, from hip to heel, "a lovely straight line."

Nevertheless, even this Eden had its serpent. Corroding civilization, in the person of the *gendarme* and the priest, was eating like an acid into the primitive purity and simplicity of the islanders. Gauguin carved the trunk of a coconut palm in savage caricature of the local bishop in indiscreet conversation with a savage Saint Theresa, and brought down upon himself, his obscene sculpture and his pagan habits, the dangerous ire of the Church.

But his skirmish with the secular arm was more immediately dangerous. Gauguin wrote a letter to the Administrator of the French possessions in the Pacific complaining that an official who combined the functions of *gendarme* and customs officer had connived at the contraband traffic in spirits, and other articles forbidden on the islands. The letter was handed over to the official mentioned, and Gauguin was condemned by a magistrate to three months' imprisonment and a fine of a thousand francs. In April, 1903, he wrote that he was preparing to go to Tahiti to appeal against the judgment, in spite of the ruinous costs of the appeal and the breakdown of his health. "It will be said all my life that I am fated to fall, to rise again, and again to fall . . . but every day I am losing all my old energy. I owe 1,400 francs just as I am about to ask a further loan to go to Papeete, and I fear I shall be refused. . . . *All these worries are killing me.*" The words proved prophetic. He never saw Tahiti again. Scarcely a month later, on May 8, 1903, he was dead.

The last white man to see him alive was the French Protestant pastor on the island, Paul Louis Vernier, who has movingly described his end. "I only knew Monsieur Gauguin as sick and almost helpless. He rarely went out, and when by chance one saw him in the valley of Atuana he was a pitiful sight, dragging himself along painfully, his legs bandaged, his feet almost always bare, a colored *pareo* over his loins and on his head a green cloth *beret* with a silver buckle on the side. A very pleasant man, perfectly gentle and simple with the Marquesans, who returned it in kind. When he died, I heard many natives exclaim with regret: 'Gauguin is dead. We are lost!'—alluding thereby to the services Gauguin had done them on several occasions in rescuing them from the hands of the *gendarmes*, who are often harsh and unjust toward the natives. Gauguin, generously and chivalrously, had made himself the champion of the natives. And there are many traces of his kindness toward them.

"He had but few relations with the Europeans in Atuana. With few

exceptions, he cordially detested them. Above all he disliked the *gendarmes* and the police in general.

"As to the islands, he had . . . a real passion for this lovely and wild nature in which his spirit found itself naturally at home. He immediately discovered the native poetry of these lands blessed by the sun. And the soul of the Maori had no secrets from him."

At the beginning of April, 1903, the good pastor received a brief message from Gauguin: "Would it be abusing your kindness if I asked you for some advice? My own powers have failed me. I am very ill, and can no longer walk."

M. Vernier went at once to Gauguin's hut. He found him suffering terribly in the legs, which were inflamed and covered with eczema. He offered to bandage him but the sick man declined politely, saying that he would do it himself. Gauguin began to talk, speaking in admirable terms of his art. He lent the pastor several books, including *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, a gift from Mallarmé himself, and gave him the portrait he had made of Mallarmé.

The pastor did not see him again for ten days. Old Tioka, a friend of Gauguin, came to him and said: "It is not well with the white. He is very sick." M. Vernier returned and found Gauguin lying on his bed and groaning, but again he forgot his pain in order to talk Art. The pastor admired such devotion.

Early on May 8, the same Tioka called him again. Gauguin was still in bed, and complained of sharp pains in the body. He asked the pastor if it was morning or evening, day or night. He had had, he said, two fainting fits, and it caused him anxiety. He talked of Flaubert's *Salammbo*. When the pastor left him, after a brief conversation, he was calm and rested.

The same morning, toward eleven o'clock, his servant, the boy Ka-hui, called hurriedly, "Come quickly. The white man is dead." The pastor found Gauguin with one leg hanging outside the bed, but still warm. Tioka was there, crying and weeping and saying, "I came to see how he was. I called up to him, '*Kōkēl Kōkēl*' (the native name of Gauguin). But he did not reply. I went in. *Hie. Hie.* Koke did not move. *Mata! (dead). Mata! Mata! Mata!*"

The pastor attempted to revive Gauguin by artificial respiration, but without avail. And when his friend Tioka saw that Gauguin was really dead he cried out, "Now there are no more men."

The next day the bishop whom Gauguin had caricatured and the priests whom he had despised claimed his body, and he was buried in the mission cemetery. His property was sold at auction. His house, his stores, his furniture and his horse were sold to an American trader for

1,500 francs. There were a few bidders for his pictures, finished and unfinished. His palette was bought for two francs by Victor Segalen, a naval doctor and writer on the Far East, who later presented it to Daniel de Monfreid. The same admirer bought, for five francs, the two carved wooden columns which stood at the entrance to Gauguin's house: one, representing two lovers fleeing into the forest, and inscribed, *Soyez amoureuses et vous serez heureuses*, and the other, more vague, more confused in its design, inscribed, *Soyez mystérieuses et vous serez heureuses*, two themes which had inspired Gauguin earlier in his Brittany periods. Segalen also obtained, for seven francs, a study of a Breton village in the snow, the last picture, significantly enough, which Gauguin painted.

The artist's famous carved walking stick with a pearl encrusted in the handle was knocked down to a jeweler in Papeete. Another cane, carved in the image of two lovers, was virtuously broken by a *gendarme* of Atuana, who considered it indecent. An album of drawings by Gauguin was furtively purchased by the Governor himself. Alone among Gauguin's cherished possessions remained untouched, under its thatched roof in the garden, the little idol in crumbling clay, the *genius loci* modeled with Gauguin's own hands, before which, local rumor ran, the painter prostrated himself in daily devotions. And that, before many years, burnt and eroded by the heat of the sun and the sudden rainstorms of the Pacific, was seized and removed by profane or avid hands.

And there on Hiva Oa Gauguin lies, the most discussed painter of his generation, essentially French, for all the Spanish blood which flowed in his veins, a Frenchman and a bourgeois at that, with all the littlenesses and the greatneses of the bourgeoisie, with its vanity, its passion for independence, for argument, for quarreling with authority. From the Spanish ancestors on his mother's side he had inherited the arrogance which caused him to be cordially detested by many who saw in his art merely charlatanism and affectation, and also perhaps the vein of mysticism which survived the experiments of the Symbolist period and led him at last to that solitary communion with savage nature which few Frenchmen prefer to the solid satisfactions of their own rich civilization.

He suffered no delusions as to his reputation, both living and posthumous. He knew that many of his contemporaries condemned him as an unprincipled egoist for having left his wife and children in penury to follow a will-o'-the-wisp which he called Art. He knew that his fellow painters accused him of adroitly imitating Pissarro, Cézanne, Van Gogh and even Émile Bernard. His Tahitian works gained him little praise and less money during his lifetime, and his eccentricities of

speech and costume, and the deliberate emphasis he laid, after his return from his first voyage to the Pacific islands, on the exotic, the primitive and the mythological aspect of his painting did not a little to harm him in the eyes of many who sincerely recognized his original gifts.

But when all is said and written, the life and the works of Gauguin form an intangible whole. "A man's work," he said a few days before his death, "is his own explanation. Everything I learned from others hindered me. I can therefore say that nobody taught me anything. True, I know so little. But I prefer this little because it is my own."

Sublime egoism, or ridiculous, according to one's attitude toward Gauguin as an artist. But he shares it with all the great painters of the past.

# The Monster

(JOSEPH) DEEMS TAYLOR (1885- )

"The Monster" is the opening sketch from a book for musical neophytes called *Of Men and Music* (1937). In the introduction to that book Deems Taylor wrote: "Many a potential music lover is frightened away by the solemnity of music's devotees. They would make more converts if they would rise from their knees." Some of these solemn devotees shudder to see Deems Taylor standing on his feet talking informally about the music in Walt Disney's *Fantasia* or to hear him making flippant quips on the radio program *Information Please*. They are inclined to dismiss him as a "popularizer." Other devotees, some of whom owe no small amount of their knowledge of music to his comments during the Sunday broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic, salute him as a musician and an educator.

Joseph Deems Taylor was born in New York City. At New York University, from which he was graduated in 1906, he showed early signs of irreverence by burlesquing grand opera for the student shows. One of his first achievements out in the world was a comic opera, *The Echo*, which saw Broadway in 1910. Another was a symphonic poem, *The Siren Song*, which won first prize in a National Federation of Music Clubs contest in 1913. He has since earned a high place as one of the most versatile American composers. Among his best-known works are his cantata, *The Highwayman* (1914), and two serious operas: *The King's Henchman*, written with Edna St. Vincent Millay and first performed at the Metropolitan on February 17, 1926; and *Peter Ibbetson*, first performed there on February 7, 1931. At the same time he has carried on a parallel career as a journalist, having been war correspondent for the New York Sunday *Tribune* (1916-17), associate editor of *Collier's* (1917-19), music critic for the New York *World* (1921-25) and the New York *American* (1931-32), and editor of the magazine *Musical America* (1927-29). Since 1936 he has acted as musical advisor to the Columbia Broadcasting System.

*Of Men and Music* is a miscellaneous collection of "observations" based on Taylor's Sunday afternoon radio talks, his reviews from the *World* and the *American*, and some magazine articles. "The Monster" is the briefest of biographies, the essence of a life in capsule form. Taylor skillfully manipulates his material to achieve a particular contrast and colors it with the dogmatic but genial confidence of the informal essayist. The sketch is both a defense of "The Monster" and a provoking challenge to debate on the age-old question: How much can genius be forgiven?

HE WAS AN UNDERSIZED LITTLE MAN, with a head too big for his body—a sickly little man. His nerves were bad. He had skin trouble. It was agony for him to wear anything next to his skin coarser than silk. And he had delusions of grandeur.

He was a monster of conceit. Never for one minute did he look at the world or at people, except in relation to himself. He was not only the most important person in the world, to himself; in his own eyes he was the only person who existed. He believed himself to be one of the greatest dramatists in the world, one of the greatest thinkers, and one of the greatest composers. To hear him talk, he was Shakespeare, Beethoven, and Plato, rolled into one. And you would have had no difficulty in hearing him talk. He was one of the most exhausting conversationalists who ever lived. An evening with him was an evening spent in listening to a monologue. Sometimes he was brilliant; sometimes he was maddeningly tiresome. But whether he was being brilliant or dull, he had one sole topic of conversation: himself. What *he* thought and what *he* did.

He had a mania for being in the right. The slightest hint of disagreement, from anyone, on the most trivial point, was enough to set him off on a harangue that might last for hours, in which he proved himself right in so many ways, and with such exhausting volubility, that in the end his hearer, stunned and deafened, would agree with him, for the sake of peace.

It never occurred to him that he and his doing were not of the most intense and fascinating interest to anyone with whom he came in contact. He had theories about almost any subject under the sun, including vegetarianism, the drama, politics, and music; and in support of these theories he wrote pamphlets, letters, books . . . thousands upon thousands of words, hundreds and hundreds of pages. He not only wrote these things, and published them—usually at somebody else's expense—but he would sit and read them aloud, for hours, to his friends and his family.

He wrote operas; and no sooner did he have the synopsis of a story, than he would invite—or rather summon—a crowd of his friends to his house and read it aloud to them. Not for criticism. For applause. When the complete poem was written, the friends had to come again, and hear *that* read aloud. Then he would publish the poem, sometimes years before the music that went with it was written. He played the piano like a composer, in the worst sense of what that implies, and he would sit down at the piano before parties that included some of the finest

pianists of his time, and play for them, by the hour, his own music, needless to say. He had a composer's voice. And he would invite eminent vocalists to his house, and sing them his operas, taking all the parts.

He had the emotional stability of a six-year-old child. When he felt out of sorts, he would rave and stamp, or sink into suicidal gloom and talk darkly of going to the East to end his days as a Buddhist monk. Ten minutes later, when something pleased him, he would rush out of doors and run around the garden, or jump up and down on the sofa, or stand on his head. He could be grief-stricken over the death of a pet dog, and he could be callous and heartless to a degree that would have made a Roman emperor shudder.

He was almost innocent of any sense of responsibility. Not only did he seem incapable of supporting himself, but it never occurred to him that he was under any obligation to do so. He was convinced that the world owed him a living. In support of this belief, he borrowed money from everybody who was good for a loan—men, women, friends, or strangers. He wrote begging letters by the score, sometimes groveling without shame, at others loftily offering his intended benefactor the privilege of contributing to his support, and being mortally offended if the recipient declined the honor. I have found no record of his ever paying or repaying money to anyone who did not have a legal claim upon it.

What money he could lay his hands on he spent like an Indian rajah. The mere prospect of a performance of one of his operas was enough to set him to running up bills amounting to ten times the amount of his prospective royalties. On an income that would reduce a more scrupulous man to doing his own laundry, he would keep two servants. Without enough money in his pocket to pay his rent, he would have the walls and ceiling of his study lined with pink silk. No one will ever know—certainly he never knew—how much money he owed. We do know that his greatest benefactor gave him \$6,000 to pay the most pressing of his debts in one city, and a year later had to give him \$16,000 to enable him to live in another city without being thrown into jail for debt.

He was equally unscrupulous in other ways. An endless procession of women marches through his life. His first wife spent twenty years enduring and forgiving his infidelities. His second wife had been the wife of his most devoted friend and admirer, from whom he stole her. And even while he was trying to persuade her to leave her first husband he was writing to a friend to inquire whether he could suggest some wealthy woman—*any* wealthy woman—whom he could marry for her money.



He was completely selfish in his other personal relationships. His liking for his friends was measured solely by the completeness of their devotion to him, or by their usefulness to him whether financial or artistic. The minute they failed him—even by so much as refusing a dinner invitation—or began to lessen in usefulness, he cast them off without a second thought. At the end of his life he had exactly one friend left whom he had known even in middle age.

He had a genius for making enemies. He would insult a man who disagreed with him about the weather. He would pull endless wires in order to meet some man who admired his work, and was able and anxious to be of use to him—and would proceed to make a mortal enemy of him with some idiotic and wholly uncalled-for exhibition of arrogance and bad manners. A character in one of his operas was a caricature of one of the most powerful music critics of his day. Not content with burlesquing him, he invited the critic to his house and read him the libretto aloud in front of his friends.

The name of this monster was Richard Wagner. Everything that I have said about him you can find on record—in newspapers, in police reports, in the testimony of people who knew him, in his own letters, between the lines of his autobiography. And the curious thing about this record is that it doesn't matter in the least.

Because this undersized, sickly, disagreeable, fascinating little man was right all the time. The joke was on us. He *was* one of the world's great dramatists; he *was* a great thinker; he *was* one of the most stupendous musical geniuses that, up to now, the world has ever seen. The world did owe him a living. People couldn't know those things at the time, I suppose; and yet to us, who know his music, it does seem as though they should have known. What if he did talk about himself all the time? If he had talked about himself for twenty-four hours every day for the span of his life, he would not have uttered half the number of words that other men have spoken and written about him since his death.

When you consider what he wrote—thirteen operas and music dramas, eleven of them still holding the stage, eight of them unquestionably worth ranking among the world's great musico-dramatic masterpieces—when you listen to what he wrote, the debts and heart-aches that people had to endure from him do not seem much of a price. Eduard Hanslick, the critic whom he caricatured in *Die Meistersinger* and who hated him ever after, now lives only because he was caricatured in *Die Meistersinger*. The women whose hearts he broke are long since dead; and the man who could never love anyone but himself has made them deathless atonement, I think, with *Tristan und*

*Isolde.* Think of the luxury with which for a time, at least, fate rewarded Napoleon, the man who ruined France and looted Europe; and then perhaps you will agree that a few thousand dollars' worth of debts were not too heavy a price to pay for the *Ring* trilogy.

What if he was faithless to his friends and to his wives? He had one mistress to whom he was faithful to the day of his death: Music. Not for a single moment did he ever compromise with what he believed, with what he dreamed. There is not a line of his music that could have been conceived by a little mind. Even when he is dull, or downright bad, he is dull in the grand manner. There is greatness about his worst mistakes. Listening to his music, one does not forgive him for what he may or may not have been. It is not a matter of forgiveness. It is a matter of being dumb with wonder that his poor brain and body didn't burst under the torment of the demon of creative energy that lived inside him, struggling, clawing, scratching to be released; tearing, shrieking at him to write the music that was in him. The miracle is that what he did in the little space of seventy years could have been done at all, even by a great genius. Is it any wonder that he had no time to be a man?

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# James J. Hill

ROY F. DIBBLE (1887-1929)

Roy F. Dibble was one of the first of the many American writers who felt the influence of Lytton Strachey as a liberating force, one of the first of the biographers whose emergence marked the rise of a "new school." He did not live long enough to complete his work, and what he wrote reveals some of the characteristic weaknesses of the new biography as well as its gusto, narrative vigor, and independence.

Dibble was born on a farm near Lake Erie in Chatauqua County, New York. He attended local schools in the village of Elm Flats and in Westfield. He was accustomed to hard work on the farm from boyhood, but already in his early years he was writing—a sonnet sequence on love and poetry, never published. Farm work and the care of a sick brother delayed until 1908 Dibble's going to college; he then entered Allegheny, but soon transferred to Clark University, where he graduated in 1912. After a year of teaching at the Sanford School for Boys in Connecticut, he determined to work for his doctorate and entered the graduate school at Columbia University. He advanced quickly, was University Fellow in 1915, and then taught for a time in Columbia College. His able and enthusiastic teaching won him a campus reputation among the undergraduates, but he seems to have been too retiring and shy or too deeply absorbed in his own work to make himself widely known among his faculty colleagues. Suddenly, following a serious operation, he was told frankly by his doctors that he had but three more years to live. The doctors were mistaken, however; and though for a time Dibble put aside his ambitions and found refuge in a "quietism inspired by Thoreau's *Walden*," which he read over again each year, he resumed his work courageously and finished his Ph.D. in 1921. His doctoral thesis, *Albion W. Tourgée* (1921), was a biography of the North Carolina carpet-bagger, political—and "impolitical"—pamphleteer, and novelist of the Reconstruction era.

Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* had appeared in 1918; *Queen Victoria* appeared in 1921. Strachey's method aroused an enthusiastic response in Dibble, who now set himself to re-evaluate nineteenth-century American figures, as Strachey had re-evaluated his Victorians, in a critical and realistic spirit. *Strenuous Americans* (1923) was the interesting result—short lives of Jesse James, Admiral Dewey, Brigham Young, J. J. Hill, P. T. Barnum, Frances E. Willard, and Mark Hanna—a gallery of rogues, heroes, and rough-riders typical of the wide varieties of American extroversion. The book was dedicated to "the Greatest Living Biographer," but the method and the style pointed

still more unmistakably to the inspiration of Lytton Strachey's example. *Strenuous Americans* was immediately successful. It caught the rising wave of a popular literary "trend." Heartened by his success, Dibble resigned his post at Columbia and plunged into the composition of his full-length biographies. *John L. Sullivan, an Intimate Narrative* (1925) and *Mohammed* (1926) are colorful and racy narratives with settings as wide apart as the poles. A third long biography, on Martin Luther, failing to find a publisher, Dibble returned to teaching, this time at Hunter College, in 1927. But the disease from which he had suffered for many years, aggravated by worries brought on by bad investments and the market crash of 1929, brought his career to a premature end. At the time of his death he had in hand an unfinished second series of short biographies, some of them published in the *Nation*, the *Century*, and elsewhere.

Dibble's colleagues at Hunter and Columbia, among them Mark Van Doren, who wrote the sketch of Dibble in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, remember him as a man who lived a good deal to himself and seldom revealed his full self even to his close friends. He probably expressed himself most completely in the enthusiasms of his classroom days and in the books he wrote.

Of his own work Dibble said, "I have strenuously endeavored to maintain a precise exposition, a scrupulous interpretation, a controlled but generous enthusiasm, and a cool-headed but warm-hearted detachment." He has "strenuously endeavored." Perhaps the adverb may suggest something of the tendency, discoverable in Dibble's pages, to the *fortissimo* and to *bravura*. The qualities in the Stracheyan method which most appealed to him, if one may guess, were perhaps its independence and realism in interpretation, its lack of reverence for accepted legends, its irony, and its power of imaginative re-creation. These qualities he sought to emulate. The work he left behind is vigorous, never merely perfunctory, full of a strong zest for life and for character, based upon a sturdy independence of judgment. The Stracheyan comparison is unfair. He had not Strachey's deftness, his rapier-glint of wit and irony, his masterly clarity and restraint of style, his creative touch. But Dibble brought to biography qualities not merely those of an imitator, qualities of strength which might have matured and mellowed further had he had a few years more of life.

## I

ONCE UPON A TIME, by one of those singular coincidences that determine the fate of empires and individuals no less frequently than the *dénouement* of fairy stories, a chance meeting brought together for the first time two persons who were destined to wave more potent wands than any fairies ever waved. In 1870, on a blustery March day, two dogsleds,

Reprinted from *Strenuous Americans*, by Roy F. Dibble, published by Liveright.

each driven by a single man, happened to cross trails on a wind-swept prairie near Winnipeg, in Manitoba. One driver was of middle age, tall and commanding, with a face so distinctively aristocratic that, even though it was entirely surrounded by a huge fur cap and an enormous, icicle-bespangled beard, good breeding shone in every flicker of the calm, cold eyes and almost glowed—for it was very cold—on the large, finely shaped nose. The other was a man still barely past thirty, though his spade-shaped beard, which completely concealed his receding chin and his heavy, projecting teeth, made him appear somewhat older on first view. His figure was short, squat and square; his face was solid and plebeian, yet undoubtedly powerful. In every physical respect, save for his beard, he differed almost absolutely from the older man.

But, after all, the difference was mainly external, for the aristocratic man was Donald A. Smith, who was fated to control the political and economic destiny of Canada for more than thirty years to come. During those years he bounded like an India-rubber ball from one political party to another, as each happened to suit or to oppose his own schemes; he conferred upon his country the benefit of building the Canadian Pacific Railroad by using every form of political and financial extortion; he won thereby a great fortune and an everlasting renown—at any rate, lasting enough so that he was dubbed Lord Strathcona, and became one of Queen Victoria's favorites; and he brought his life to a fitting close by devoting a large part of his hard-earned wealth to the organization and equipment of Lord Strathcona's Horse, which performed heroic deeds in helping to save England from destruction at the hands of atrocious Boers.

As for the young man—"I liked him then," said Smith, some twenty-five years later, "and I never had reason to change my opinion."

The young man was James J. Hill.

## II

Fairy stories have been mentioned; and Hill's life, indeed, reads like one. For surely the nineteenth century was a fairyland ruled by a number of godmothers, each of whom became more powerful than her predecessor. Godmother Agrarianism was forced, however slowly and reluctantly, to abdicate rather early in the century by a prodigiously pregnant dame called Industrial Revolution, who, with the timely assistance of her husband, Imperialism, became mother to a number of lusty youngsters: Urbanism, Suburbanism, Competition and finally Consolidation—more familiarly known as Dame Trust or Dame Monopoly—who still maintains her rule very successfully, in spite of the efforts of a doddering old dwarf called Governmental Regulation.

But, of course, every fairy land has its quota of wicked persons and several of them—for example, the triplets, Strike, Labor Union and Socialism; a frail but curiously long-lived elf named Democracy; and a vile, pimple-faced gnome called Anarchy—caused the good fairies to experience some very anxious moments. As for James J. Hill, he fits in quite nicely in the role of Cinderella: Poverty was the wicked step-mother, Jay Gould and E. H. Harriman were the ugly step-sisters; but a lovely prince, known variously as Luck, Opportunity, Chance or Fortune, at last fitted the glass slipper on the foot of his bride and carried her off in triumph. But perhaps this is anticipating too much; it is time to look at some of the details that compose this romantic portrait.

To his biographer James Jerome Hill gave a three-fold injunction to execute in outlining his life: "Make it plain and simple and true"; and the biographer fulfilled the first and second stipulations in an eminently satisfactory manner. Hill's youth, according to this record, not merely indexed his future; it included those qualities and episodes so dear to the hearts of all good Americans when they turn for inspiration, as they so frequently do, to the lives of their national heroes. He was a "self-made" man; he was reared in poverty—better still, in a log cabin. He was, to be sure, a foreigner—born near Guelph, Ontario, on September 16, 1838—but eventually he redeemed and even glorified himself by becoming a naturalized United States citizen. Educated in a Quaker academy, he showed himself "quick to learn and incessant in application" of his brains to the usual elementary subjects, though it is true that he approached the bounds of dangerous unorthodoxy by acquiring some Latin, "a very little Greek," algebra and geometry. It had been decided that he was to be a doctor; but the accidental loss of one eye "was as serious an obstacle to the plan as was the death of his father," which occurred in 1852. Then, like a good story-book hero, he abandoned all thought of himself, clerked in a village store, and thus contributed to the support of his widowed mother. At eighteen he began to dream those Oriental dreams that troubled him all his life, and, no longer needed at home, he went to New York and Philadelphia; but he found no opportunity of embarking as a sailor, and accordingly journeyed west as far as St. Paul, Minnesota—then a mere settlement on a muddy levee, commonly called "Pig's Eye." His funds gave out at this point; the last expedition for the Pacific Coast had departed just before his arrival, and he therefore settled down at St. Paul—for life, as it turned out.

From 1856 to 1873, Hill forged ahead in various lines of activity; he progressed slowly, but at least he progressed. Serving as clerk to several

steamboat companies for the first nine years, and then entering a partnership in a general transportation and commission business, he gained precisely the sort of experience that was to make him such a formidable figure in the Northwest industrial world. He became thoroughly acquainted with the surrounding territory, and he incessantly studied the general railroad situation; thus, step by step, he acquired a tremendous capacity for cramming and storing away in his pigeon-holed brain concrete facts and figures of the most complex sort. By 1873 he had mastered an enormous amount of practical knowledge, gained a considerable fortune, and won a wife. At the Merchant's Hotel in St. Paul where he lived, he fell in love with a waitress, Mary Theresa Mehegan, the daughter of an Irish "tailor in a small way"; she was "a sensible, high-principled girl," who eventually bore him ten children—seven daughters and three sons. His health during these years was excellent, in fact, and he "was fond of saying that at the time of his marriage he weighed but 135 pounds and had a waist measure of 29 inches."

### III

The year 1873 was the pivotal year of Hill's life. Before, he had been plain "Jim Hill," a trustworthy, hard-working, successful business man, of some local importance; afterward, within the space of thirty years, he leapt into the position of almost absolute dictator of the economic and political welfare of the Northwest. The evolution of American industrial development reached its peak in his personality; inexplicable destiny had decided that he was the man who should forge the last link in the chain of events that led to the complete subjugation and settlement of the last virgin territory in the United States; the long, slow process of mechanization of nature—and man—in the greatest nation of the Western World culminated in him. It may not be possible to determine precisely how this came about; how, by what curious shifts of fortune, by what odd combinations of chance and opportunism, he attained this eminence; but some facts, at least, are fairly clear.

For several decades prior to 1873, the United States had been railroad-crazy. Through the connivance of wealthy individuals and the national government, including the Supreme Court—for the wealthy individuals, of whom the most representative specimen was Roscoe Conkling, were generally Senators who possessed a two-fold power: the power that came from serving as counsel for different corporations, and the power of confirming presidential nominees to the Supreme Court—judicial decisions were given which showed an ever increasing

tendency to expedite the growth of great corporate enterprises. Such a state of affairs may have been morally justifiable and even legally impeccable; at all events, it *was* the state of affairs. As a result, huge railroad systems had come into being chiefly by the aid of large subsidies, and by grants of territorial right-of-way. In the end, expansion became too rapid and the whole mushroom growth collapsed in the unparalleled panic of 1873. Corporate structures that had seemed as firmly founded as the Pyramids came tumbling down like a house of cards; and out of this mass of debris Hill—whose magic touch always turned panics into veritable bonanzas—extracted the materials which enabled him to build up his own enormous fortune.

Among the lesser railroads that crashed to ruin in that national catastrophe was the St. Paul & Pacific—a system that included only some five hundred miles of track, but one that held a keystone position; for it was a potential bond that might connect the great expanse of Canadian territory centering in Winnipeg with the outside world. Indeed, it was more than this; for Donald A. Smith was already dreaming dreams of the time when he was to be given fifty million acres of land and a subsidy of \$30,000,000 for the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, and James J. Hill was seeing visions of the time when he was to own a parallel two thousand mile line, stretching from St. Paul to Seattle. With all of Southwestern Canada and all of the Northwestern States included in the grip of these twin lines of steel; with Smith and Hill in mutual agreement that there should be no competition between the two systems, inasmuch as they were mutually interdependent; these two railroads would have a strangle hold upon the industrial development of that magnificent expanse of land. Surely, surely, there was something providential in that apparently fortuitous meeting on a wintry prairie in March, 1870.

In order that these dreams and visions might be fulfilled, certain things were necessary: daring, initiative, energy: and—more concretely—money, prescient information, and settlers for the virgin territory. Whether Smith and Hill had foreseen all this, or whether they were mere opportunists who struck when the iron was hot, can never be determined; the important fact remains that such were the means employed.

From 1873 until he finally got control of the St. Paul & Pacific, Hill was literally possessed by the possibilities that lay in that road. "He used to talk it at all times. He sat in the old club house holding Kittson [one of his partners] in a corner and boring the plan into him with a threatening forefinger. He ate and drank and slept with it." Nor was this strange; for, though the St. Paul & Pacific was contemptuously



referred to as "two streaks of rust and the right of way," its latent assets were enormous. In fact, its total valuation—a valuation that included over two million acres of land—was conservatively estimated at \$20,000,000, and it could be bought for less than \$7,000,000. In other words, here was a property obtainable for about thirty cents on a dollar. Not a bad bargain, certainly; but the Dutch burghers and bankers of Amsterdam who, years previously, had paid over \$13,000,000 for the railroad knew only that, when it became bankrupt, their investment had been cut in half—they could not understand the potentialities of the investment, for the excellent reason that the persons who were in control of the road had carefully kept all such knowledge from reaching their ears.

But there were others who did know these facts. What was more, Hill knew that *they* knew; and that was why he continued to shake his forefinger more insistently than ever in the faces of Kittson and Smith. The directors of the Chicago & Northwestern and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul were not blind, and, almost bankrupt though they were, they loomed ominously in the foreground. But the genius of Hill not merely loomed—it became feverishly, yet astutely active. In consequence, so his biographer states with admirable candor, these two roads "were played judiciously against each other during this time by Mr. Hill, who had the confidence of both. Each was pacified by the assurance that the other should have no part in the new undertaking." Eventually, the inevitable happened: superior genius completely defeated inferior talent. Through a maze of intricately tangled legalistic proceedings, this fact finally emerged: Hill, Smith, George Stephen (a wealthy cousin of Smith) and Kittson acquired the defaulted bonds of the St. Paul & Pacific for less than \$7,000,000—barely one-third of their actual value. Incidentally, they were required to deposit only \$280,000 to clinch the bargain; they were "allowed to turn in receiver's debentures and bonds as payment for the purchase price." In May, 1879, the good work was completed: the Hill coterie organized the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad Company for the express purpose of buying the St. Paul & Pacific under foreclosure—they desired, above all else, to form a stabilized combination of the interlocking United States and Canadian lines and get them entirely out of the court's jurisdiction into absolutely private possession. In June the decree of foreclosure was granted, and within a year Hill and his satellites "were already out of the woods so far as the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba was concerned," his biographer remarks; but he does not explain too clearly how this fortunate result was obtained. The chief reason was this: immediately after the foreclosure took place,

Hill & Co. sold most of the land property of the railroad for over \$13,000,000. No wonder they smiled sweetly at each other in the intimacies of their business meetings; no wonder, too, that the "grasping" Dutch bondholders, who had so mercilessly insisted that the unheard-of sum of \$280,000 should be advanced prior to the sale, gnashed their teeth in impotent anger when they discovered how neatly they had been tricked; and the imagination flounders at the mere thought of their emotional condition, when, twenty-seven years later, they learnt that Hill and his partners had divided between them, as the spoils of this enterprise, the sum of \$407,000,000.

## IV

Although Hill had now only laid the foundation of his subsequent dazzling career as "Empire-builder," the stupendous structure that he was to erect is, to a large degree, a matter of more interest to the economist and historian than to the biographer. One cannot escape noticing, in the evolution of his life, what one almost always notes in the progress of towering financial magnates: with their steady advance toward an ever-growing wealth, power and fame, there is a corresponding diminution of intimately personal details and episodes. In proportion as they become larger and grander, in like proportion do their personalities shrink into a vaguer and vaguer remoteness. Only a comparatively few persons—and some of them still live—could, if they chose, speak the words that would be the Open Sesame to the carefully veiled recesses and winding labyrinths which conceal so much that forms a part of the cavernous depth and breadth of Hill's volcanic personality; but their lips have been, and will doubtless continue to be, conveniently dumb. It happens, however, that the terrific forces which were submerged in that volcano at times became uncontrollable, rumbled, and burst forth in all their wild fury; and the illumination that accompanied those rare explosions made the interior as light as day for a brief instant. Besides, there were a few unguarded chinks and crevices in its vast surface, through which the patient explorer, lying in wait, could peep and get a fairly good glimpse of the volcano in its quiet moments.

In all the multiplicity of interests that occupied Hill from his first emergence into a recognized position of power, until his final retirement at the height of his astonishing success, two major activities dominated the host of his lesser works. Slowly, steadily, with imponderable determination and inflexible persistence, he ranged ahead, organizing and maturing railroad combinations that pointed invariably toward the complete control of the entire Northwest. Side by side with this ideal,

he nourished another that was even greater: the domination of the Northwest was, in his mind, but the stepping-stone toward a rule over the immeasurable resources of Oriental commerce. Everything in his life was henceforth subsidiary to these two closely interlinked ideals. As he advanced from one outpost to another, he left the abandoned territory so perfectly organized that there was nothing left for any interloping intruders to seize—his progressive control had attained such a smooth yet deadly momentum that it crushed all opposition. If this policy was ruthless, it was merely the outgrowth of a ruthless theory evolved in a ruthless century: the theory that the rights of property overshadow the rights of individuals—except for a very few persons, such as James J. Hill, who had been providentially picked to control property rights. Whatever and whoever stood in Hill's path must stand aside. "I am a firm believer," he once remarked, "in all natural laws . . . and the law of the survival of the fittest is a natural law." If the corpses of any competing concerns, smashed beneath his economic juggernaut, showed faint signs of reviving, he was wont to say, with grim humor, "If anything should occur to give them the breath of life, we will be around at the christening." The greatest paradox of the nineteenth century was that it gave birth to twins who had no family resemblance whatever—an uncompromisingly merciless economic creed, and a piously lachrymose humanitarian creed—and the paradox becomes even more paradoxical when one reflects that both were suckled at the same breast and grew with equal rapidity, just as good twins should. But only the first of the two had much interest for Hill.

By 1893 his dreams had come true to the extent that the Great Northern and the Canadian Pacific roads were completed, and were operating mutually "against Gould's Union Pacific." But the dreams had not been wholly without nightmare elements. For instance, when the parent branch of the Great Northern—the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba—began to function in 1879, Hill and his gang needed money. The gang strongly advocated the "watering" of the road's stock to the extent of \$25,000,000 but Hill, always cautiously cunning, objected and stuck out for a paltry \$5,000,000. "Water!" he snorted. "We've let in the whole of Lake Michigan already!" The cryptic remark remains cryptic; but a compromise of \$15,000,000 was finally agreed upon. As the Great Northern wound snakily westward, crawling over wide plains, bridging great rivers, and eating into the vitals of lofty mountains, special laws and franchises had been required—and granted—for the territory over which it extended; and in this connection a curious fact must be noted. In 1883 the Minnesota Legislature appointed a

committee to investigate persistent charges that its members had been deluged with bribe money for the purpose of inducing them to vote for certain laws that were indispensable for the successful completion of the Great Northern; and, while it was not definitely shown that Hill was directly involved in the business, the committee's report proved that an appalling amount of corruption, in the form of lobbying and bribery by railroad interests, was rampant. Whatever Hill's relation to this affair may have been, his official biography is authority for a series of interesting admissions. Hill worked hand in hand with the Democratic bosses in 1884 for the nomination and election of Cleveland, and "his support contributed no little to that nomination and election . . ."; and Hill and Cleveland later became close personal friends—so close, in fact, that "After Mr. Cleveland's election the patronage of the Northwest was turned over substantially to two men in St. Paul who were staunch Democrats and good friends of Mr. Hill." In the light of these events, one is not surprised to learn that Cleveland once said, "Mr. Hill is one of the most remarkable men I have seen . . ." and that Hill was an ardent supporter of Cleveland in his stand against the free silver "ghost dancers"—so very ardent that in August, 1896, Hill personally piloted Mark Hanna from one financier to another in Wall Street, gave him his own guarantee for \$5,000,000, and finished a good day's work by saying to the delighted Mark, "Should you need more look in on me at St. Paul." In later years, "at any time the mention of the ex-president's name would stir Mr. Hill and send him off on a train of musing but enthusiastic eulogy"; and, through a common love of fishing, their friendship grew into delectable intimacy at Hill's salmon preserve in Labrador.

Concerning one fact, however, there is no possible shadow of doubt. Between 1880 and 1883, Hill was using the accumulated surplus funds of the St. Paul, Minnesota & Manitoba—funds belonging to its stock-holders—for the expansion of that road into the Great Northern; in plain language, he borrowed money, without troubling to pay interest, from his company's treasury. Had this daring device failed—had the railroad gone on the rocks—it is at least possible that the doors of some Minnesota penitentiary would have closed upon him. But the device, while admittedly "not usual," was, we are told, "morally unassailable"; and anyhow it was "justified by the event." The "extraordinary but admirable confidence" of his stock-holders, who had naturally "expected these surplus profits to be distributed," was in the end rewarded; and Hill, instead of donning a convict's garb, was richer by several millions. With this episode in mind, one feels very sympathetic toward his point of view concerning the honesty of his employees—a point of view made

crystal clear in his own dictum: "*If there is a shadow of suspicion attached to them, discharge them at once.* That . . . will set a good example to others in the future." Some of his employees, it is clear, had tried to profit by following one notably good example of the not very remote past.

But, unfortunately for Hill, all men were not so friendly as Cleveland nor so lenient as his own stock-holders. There, confronting him at every step of his advance, was the specter of Jay Gould with his vice-like clutch on the Union Pacific, and indeed on the whole Northwest through his control of its representatives in Washington. In order that the infant Great Northern might cross the regions of Dakota and Montana, a special charter, authorizing its construction through the Indian reservations therein, was indispensable; and Gould, by means of a powerful lobby at Washington, prevented the passage of the charter for a time—but only for a time. One day, as he sat in his New York office, the door burst open and in rushed a menacing figure: a veritable gorilla of a man, with an abnormally long torso and abnormally short legs, with prodigiously heavy chest and neck, with thick, sinewy arms, and limbs like granite columns. The great, dome-like head shook so vigorously that the long, tangled iron-gray hair and the bristling iron-gray beard tossed violently about; the one good eye blazed like a living coal, until it seemed to bore and burn its way straight to the center of Gould's weazened soul, and even the sightless eye seemed to show a dull glimmer. Then the beard burst asunder, the thick lips snarled back, and from between the huge teeth there came a succession of hoarse, growling barks that finally shaped themselves into these snapping ejaculations: "You've played the — hog in this matter just as long as you're going to be permitted. Unless you call off your — Washington bushwackers at once . . . I'll tear down the whole — business about your ears . . . I'll go to Washington and camp there until I nail every one of your crooks to the doors of the Capitol by their — ears. I'll . . ." But Mr. Gould had heard enough; and in an amazingly short space of time the dirt in the Indian reservation was flying—legally flying—in every direction.

It is true that, as the dirt flew about, beauty fled before it; but what did it matter? Was Hill engaged in a poetic enterprise? It seems not, for to his chief engineer he gave this order: "We don't care enough about Rocky Mountain scenery to spend a large sum of money in developing it . . . What we want is the best possible line, shortest distance, lowest grades, and least curvature that we can build between the points to be covered." As the clangor and turmoil of modern progress disrupted the brooding quiet of those hitherto undisturbed sylvan

spaces, one fancies that the grim ghost of Leatherstocking, jealously guarding the last large section of virgin solitude in the United States, frowned menacingly; but Hill had no time, and no desire, to worry about the private concerns of ghosts.

Nevertheless, he was constantly forced, willy-nilly, to worry about the concerns and actions of men. Late in 1891, the settlers in the Red River Valley of North Dakota were thunderstruck upon hearing that the Great Northern Railroad Company had issued an edict commanding them to vacate that section of territory, because, so it was claimed, the territory belonged to the railroad. The claim had its origin in this manner: in 1884 Hill had demanded that the Red River lands should be ceded to him, basing his demand upon an act of Congress which, in 1857, had awarded those lands to a railroad that had since become insolvent. In the intervening years the General Land Office, taking it for granted that the land no longer belonged to the defunct railroad, had given full title of possession to the settlers—and now, in 1884, Hill was demanding these lands as his rightful due. After seven years of legal battling, the Supreme Court decided that the lands did, indeed, belong to Hill; hence the 1891 edict. The settlers at once appealed to Congress, which considerately passed an act permitting the Great Northern to choose, as a substitute, an equal area of land, that, like the relinquished Red River land, must be non-mineral. And this was precisely what Hill had hoped for; he was thus enabled to select the most valuable timber lands in Montana, Idaho and Washington. Shortly afterward, an interesting discovery was made: rich mineral deposits underlay a large part of the timber. This was certainly very lucky; and Hill was so pleased with the Commissioner of the Land Office—through whose wise forethought the timber-and-mineral territory came into Hill's grip—that he showed his gratitude by permitting the Montana Legislature to send the Commissioner to the United States Senate. When, in a period of railroad labor trouble, some of his own men went on strike, he fumed with impotent rage at first; then the craftiness born of intimate dealings with crafty men returned, and he consented to arbitrate. His own statement shows what a famous victory the strikers gained: "The newspaper reports indicate that the men won . . . and this we have been careful not to contradict."

With the control, completion and operation of the Great Northern so satisfactorily compassed by 1893, Hill might conceivably have eased up on his labors; but any form of ease was, to his mind, the abomination of abominations—and besides, there were mighty railroad systems still to be grabbed up with the omnipresent help of the law. It happened, very conveniently for Hill's schemes, that his greatest competitor—the

parallel Northern Pacific—went into a receivership only six months after the inauguration of the Great Northern; in all probability, there would soon be another christening party. There was. The despairing owners of the Northern Pacific, in desperate need of a supreme rehabilitator of decrepit properties, looked around until they found a past master in that art—J. Pierpont Morgan. Hill and Morgan, being birds of a feather, had flocked together more than once already; and henceforth they were to twitter on the same branch for the rest of their lives. In a very little time they had evolved this partnership plan: the Great Northern was to assume the financial liabilities of the Northern Pacific, and as a fitting reward was to receive half of its capital stock. When this became known, a clamor arose—monopoly, supremely able successor to competition, was growing more and more suspect. Certain state laws had already been passed, forbidding the consolidation of parallel lines; and in 1896 the Supreme Court actually handed down a decision sustaining these laws. The enemies of Hill and Morgan chuckled, and the farmers living on the lands included between these two roads breathed easier; but—there are laws—and laws, as Hill was thoroughly aware. Requesting those concerned with him in the affair “to avoid for the present any discussion of the proposed unification of interest,” he concocted a plan which would be lawfully unlawful, and therefore satisfactory in every way. In place of the principle of joint ownership by corporations, he substituted the principle of joint ownership by individuals. In other words, Hill and Morgan, each “acting” for the stock-holders in their respective corporations, went blithely ahead just as though nothing had happened—as indeed nothing had, except the complete attainment of their desires and the strengthening of the bond of friendship between them.

Very shortly that bond was to be made even more firm by their contest with a common foe. Suddenly, almost without warning, a new comet of the first magnitude blazed a fiery trail across the railroad firmament. In 1897 E. H. Harriman became the dominating force in the management of the long tottering Union Pacific and it tottered no more. The mere fact that the Hill and Harriman systems overlapped was sufficient evidence that, pending an occasional breathless truce, these two worthy antagonists would be continually crossing swords. The first skirmish, which proved to be but a prelude to what was perhaps the most notorious battle between financial giants that the world has seen, came from their common desire to possess the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy—the channel through which lay access to Chicago, the Great Lake regions, and the cotton fields of the South. Both men naturally knew these facts, fully appreciated the magnitude of

the prize, and worked with equal zeal to win it; but Hill worked to more purpose. To be sure, Harriman drew first blood by purchasing a percentage of the Burlington stock late in 1900; but he did not buy enough to ensure a victory. Hill merely winced at the scratch, and by a rapid and skillful thrust won the first bout. In March, 1901, he bought out the Burlington, so surreptitiously that Harriman never suspected his danger until it was too late.

But Harriman, temporarily worsted, was stirred as he had never been stirred before; and he at once delivered a counterthrust so entirely unsuspected and so deadly in its aim that Hill was almost taken unawares—almost, but not quite. In March, 1901, Harriman did not have a cent's worth of Northern Pacific stock; by the first of May he owned \$78,000,000 of the total \$150,000,000 capitalization of the Northern Pacific. Hill, in Seattle, had noticed with alarm the sales of enormous quantities of this stock, and sniffed trouble without being sure as to where the precise source of the trouble lay. He at once secured a special train and unlimited right of way to St. Paul; arriving there, after making the fastest run from the Pacific to the Mississippi that had ever been made, he continued more slowly—he was now on a foreign system—to New York, which he reached on May 3. The situation was made clear to him, and on the next day he sent a cablegram to Morgan, in Italy, explaining the crisis in their affairs, and urging the immediate purchase of 150,000 shares of common stock as the only possible means of preventing disaster. On May 5 Morgan's urgent consent came—for, as he later explained, he felt "morally responsible for its management"—and within two days the Hill-Morgan forces had won; or won to the extent that Harriman saw his fight was lost. On the ninth the well-known panic broke: Northern Pacific common soared to \$1,000 per share, while other standard securities declined to half of their intrinsic value—United States Steel, for instance, sank from 46 to 24. In the terrific orgy of buying and selling that was precipitated by this private battle between three men, multitudes of other men—brokers, speculators, and thousands of honest investors—were swept to ruin. "What sort of a man is this Hill?" a widow, whose whole fortune was invested in his possessions, once asked of a friend. "He is the sort of man to whom a single share of stock owned by a widow, would be just as sacred as the possessions of the greatest millionaire stock-holder in his system," was the reply.

After the storm had cleared away, it was discovered that, so far as the principals were concerned, the situation was practically unchanged. But the public was rather perturbed; it did not seem quite right, some-



how, that the clashing interests of three multi-millionaires should cause a tempest that had utterly obliterated the scant savings of a mass of people. Obviously, therefore, some explanation was advisable; and Hill magnanimously complied by passing the buck. When he heard of Harriman's trick, he gained much sympathy by a proper display of righteous indignation. We learn that his face paled to the temples with passion; and, as his hands clutched and unclutched, his harsh voice burst out: "It is the greatest outrage of modern times. Thousands of people have been ruined, and needlessly, by the greed of a small group of men . . . I took no part in this disgraceful thing . . . Nothing could have tempted me to take part in the affair. Praise God, I've no pockets in my shroud." Almost at the same time, the gentleman who had pockets in his shroud was privately remarking, "Anyhow, he calls me 'Ed.," and within two months "Ed." was a member on the board of directors of Hill's Burlington.

Three years later, to be sure, Hill and Harriman engaged in another legal tilt over the distribution of the assets of the Northern Securities Company—a concern organized chiefly by Hill and Morgan for the purpose of preventing any other public scandals such as the Northern Pacific affair. The third member of importance was, one is pleased to note, no less a person than "Ed." But in 1904 the Supreme Court handed down decisions dissolving the new company, and directing Harriman to accept a loss in the shape of a portion of depreciated Great Northern stock. These two actions, it was commonly believed, were equally unfavorable to Hill and Harriman—how pleasant it was to reflect that two of the country's wealthiest men had felt the sharp teeth of the law! But shortly—such are the providential workings of the law!—Harriman sold his Great Northern stock for a net profit of \$58,000,000; as for Hill, let him speak for himself. "So the Northern Securities Company went out of business. What has been the result? What is the difference? To the owners of the properties, merely the inconvenience of holding two certificates of stock of different colors instead of one, and of keeping track of two different sets of securities." Immediately after Hill had heard of this "legal defeat," he waved his hand toward a map of the United States that hung in his office and boasted to a friend: "I've made my mark on the surface of the earth, and they can't wipe it out!"

On Harriman's death in 1909, Hill commented: "His properties are in fine shape. . . . I have done a good deal of business with him, and some of it was pretty strenuous at times, but we were good personal friends throughout. . . . Perhaps he is better off. I believe he is happy now."

## v

At last, in 1907, Hill resigned as President of the Great Northern and his son Louis reigned in his stead. The great spiderweb system of railroads had been so indissolubly spun, and had snared so many flies for the monstrous spinner to suck dry, that, bloated and swollen to enormous proportions, he had lost his lust for further conquests. Amazing wealth, power and fame were his; with so many ideals more than attained, he had begun to grow tired of the whole business. No longer could his long over-burdened mind retain the appalling mass of intricate figures and countless facts it had once so hungrily seized and so easily classified. He was growing sick of it all; so sick that he became more forgetful, peevish and irritable every day. Even when a profusion of honors was showered upon him—when he was the lionized hero of innumerable receptions, dinners, feasts and parades; when Yale conferred upon him the enviably esoteric distinction that is undeniably attendant upon an honorary LL.D.; when Harvard gallantly sustained its ancient traditions of culture by the establishment of the James J. Hill Professorship of Transportation—somehow or other, they left him curiously cold. He was tired of repeating to his careless underlings, for the thousandth time, that the hauling of empty freight cars was a disgrace and a sin; tired of prodding and nagging at mediocre or—unspeakable outrage!—traitorous servants of his interests.

All this inward unrest signified that something more than encroaching old age was wearing him down. And that something seems to have been this: the greatest ideal of all—the control of Oriental commerce—had proved unattainable. Popular disapproval had at last forced those in power to forbid railroad companies the opportunity of making competitive export rates; so it had come about that Hill's Great Northern Steamship Company, organized in 1900 to make real his dream of the economic conquest of Asia, had become almost worthless within five years. With it had perished something far more important—his grandiose scheme of a revolutionized world commerce. For the first time, he, James J. Hill, the "Napoleon of Railroads," had actually been defeated! Was it—*could* it be possible that there were insuperable forces to which he must bow? Apparently there were; and this realization sapped his surpassing energy and extinguished his flaming ambition. The heights to which that energy and ambition had attained are made clear by this statement, published as an ordinary newspaper announcement in October, 1906: "James J. Hill has completed a deal with the U. S. Steel Co. for the sale of over 7,000,000 tons of iron ore in Minnesota. This sale will yield between \$450,000,000 and

\$600,000,000 to the Great Northern." After this final tremendous explosion, the great volcano died slowly, year by year, until it became utterly extinct.

Occasionally, to be sure, it spluttered with a momentary return of the old-time fury. As old age drew on, his convulsive irritability began to manifest itself in childish outbursts of rage. Once a clerk in his office—one Charles Swinburne Spittles—did something that aroused his anger. Glaring ferociously into the unfortunate man's face—an owlsh face, with a beetling brow, a preposterously projecting hooked nose, and a cutaway chin—he bellowed: "Spittles, I don't like your name and I don't like your face; you're fired!" and then hurled himself out of the room. In a flash, Spittles's superior rushed up and said: "From now on, Spittles, your name will be *Charles Swinburne* only, and when Hill comes into the room, *turn your face to the wall!*" In a short time Hill was bestowing high praise upon an industrious new clerk, with a pleasantly poetic name and a Cheshire Cat countenance. At another time, having suddenly become enraged at poor telephone service, he tore the instrument from the wall, threw it into the back yard, and then stamped and kicked it into pieces.

So he wisely laid most of his burdens down in 1907, and tried to enjoy life. But life had so unconsciously and yet so inevitably become such a drab procession of facts and figures, of statistics and stocks, that he found his capacity for enjoyment was not large. His New York mansion, and his massive colonial edifice on a height of St. Paul, built according to the most modern standards of excellence in plumbing, heating and lighting, and also graced with priceless jewels, rugs, china and paintings "of the best-accepted standards of the time"—these things were all pleasant in their way; but, gazing once at the paintings in his gallery, he sighed to a friend, "Ah, it was a great pleasure to get those pictures together, one of the greatest of my life. But it's all gone now." Still, curiously enough, the jewels never wholly lost their attraction; and there were other things that were attractive too. What esthetic satisfaction he could experience while strolling on his model stock farm among his herds of blooded cattle, whose pedigrees and names he knew so perfectly; how gratifying it was to do "pure missionary work" by delivering hundreds of lectures to schools, state fairs and farmers' meetings, on the necessity of conserving and developing natural resources, and of forever practicing, in every field of endeavor, his own inclusive creed: "Work, hard work, intelligent work, and then some more work!" The greatest of follies, he reiterated to his audiences, was the folly of being lazy and enjoying life; work was a privilege for which they should be duly grateful; and his hearers collectively nodded

their heads and reflected that the speaker had dispensed that privilege as widely and as unselfishly as any man of his time. Especially were they pleased at the profound scope of his observations: "The greatest need of the coming era will be pay-rolls"; "In my opinion there are good and bad men in all the walks of life"; "The Bible will be the measure of the mental growth of this republic and of the prosperity of our nation." Upon reading such passages as these, one can easily comprehend why it was that Hill always maintained that the best model of English style was *Pilgrim's Progress*—though it is true that he was never able to appreciate Browning.

Then, too, he could experience the pleasure of being generous. When Hill was lauded for the gifts he made to different institutions, he would show a praiseworthy modesty and shyness; eventually he would cover his confusion by offering an economic explanation. "Look," he would say, "at the millions of foreigners pouring into this country to whom the Roman Catholic Church represents the only authority that they either fear or respect. What will be their social view, their political action . . . if that single controlling force should be removed?" A man whose father was a Baptist, whose mother was a Methodist, and whose wife was a Catholic, could hardly have failed to become infected with a few religious ideas and beliefs. One of these was a belief in charity; and if charitable activities happened to be as much a matter of good business as was the improvement of his cattle, the construction of sound railroads, and the annihilation or absorption of competing lines, so much the better for charity. In particular, if the Catholic Church and Hill were mutually dependent; if the Catholic Church aided Hill through its stabilizing influence upon the hordes of Northwestern immigrants, and if Hill aided the Catholic Church by giving those immigrants the privilege of abundant labor; if it had been providentially ordained that the fear of God and the fear of poverty were absolutely indispensable for the enrichment of Catholicism and of James J. Hill—then it was natural—very, very natural—that Hill should give material assistance to Catholicism, and that Catholicism should return the compliment by giving spiritual assistance to Hill.

At any rate, it is a fact that, when Hill died from "troubles in the digestive tract," on May 29, 1916, the Vicar-General of the Diocese of St. Paul comforted the dying hours of a man who had never openly joined the True Church. It is also a fact that the Catholic ritual for the dead was used at his funeral. On the whole, it seems fairly probable that Hill's single book, *Highways of Progress*, will never attain the distinction of being included in that rogues' gallery of literature—the Index.

Hill has vanished; but he assuredly made his mark on the earth. The modern world, of which he is such a superb symbol—a world where mechanistic force has made life so efficiently comfortable and so ideally material, and at the same time so despairingly complex and so luxuriously unsatisfying—seems as indissolubly secure to most moderns as a materialistic heaven seemed to their forefathers. But—troublesome thought!—perhaps the one is even more fantastic and evanescent than the other. Perhaps the gods, in a playfully ironic mood, will one day decree that a world created by machinery shall by machinery be destroyed, and that the creators shall perish together with their creations in some cataclysmic contest. And if this should happen, perhaps, also, a simpler and more primitive state of things will follow: a society too wise to deify force, too serene to labor over-much, and too Arcadian to congregate in a barbarously competitive agony—a civilization so thoroughly civilized that (is it possible?) the old-fashioned fairies, so long banished from the earth, will return. Should such an hypothesis come true, it is even conceivable that railroads would no longer exist; and some citizen of that distant Utopia, wandering over the once more quiet plains and mountains of the Northwest, may experience an emotion blended of pity and thanksgiving when he chances to come upon one of the most enduring vestiges of an ancient, an almost forgotten story—two streaks of rust.

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# The American Plan

JOHN DOS PASSOS (1896- )

John Roderigo Dos Passos was born in Chicago. His father, a well-to-do corporation lawyer, was the son of a Portuguese immigrant; his mother came of old Virginia and Maryland stock. After graduation from Harvard in 1916, he left for Spain to study architecture and promptly began driving an ambulance in France. During three years of this he was collecting material for two novels. The first, *One Man's Initiation* (1919), was a sensitive account of a young ambulance driver's impressions, largely autobiographical. It created little stir. The second, *Three Soldiers* (1921), was a scathing analysis of the effects of the military machine on a trio of representative Americans. It established the twenty-five-year-old author as a satiric novelist of real promise.

In the next fifteen years Dos Passos more than fulfilled that promise. *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), his brilliant kaleidoscopic novel of New York City, was followed by *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *Nineteen Nineteen* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936), the three novels of the trilogy *U.S.A.* (1938). During the same period he published a volume of poems, *A Pushcart at the Curb* (1922), and a collection of experimental dramas, *Three Plays* (1934). He stored the fruits of years of alert wandering in several travel books, the most recent of which, *Journeys Between Wars* (1938), includes selections from the others. But he is still best known as a novelist, and although his latest tale, *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939), was not very well received, he remains one of the most daring and powerful novelists in America today.

*U.S.A.*, from which the following selections are taken, is not a bed book for escapists. The America of John Dos Passos is a world of unpleasant sights and sounds and smells, of violence in the name of the law, want in the midst of plenty, bitter disillusionment and discontent. Yet there is beauty in the ugliness and a deep, pervading human sympathy beneath the bitterness. The storm clouds of criticism have raged about Dos Passos' head. He has been pilloried as a pessimist and tagged with a number of conflicting political labels. But few will deny that he has been an honest and earnest champion in the fight against man's inhumanity to man.

There is no dominant central figure in the trilogy. Dos Passos follows the lives of twelve fictitious characters, six men and six women, through the first thirty years of the twentieth century. Crossing and recrossing the threads, dropping them and picking them up again, he tells these stories with a simple directness which conveys the illusion

of incontrovertible fact. And the characters do not perform against a bare backdrop. To realize the society which is the actual hero of his work, Dos Passos introduces three experimental techniques: the "News-reel," a *mélange* of topical shreds and patches—headlines, news-items, popular songs, and gags; the "Camera Eye," a series of illuminating flashes of the author's own thought processes; and, finally, a collection of twenty-seven short biographical miniatures.

In these biographies live the outstanding figures of three decades of American life. Besides "The American Plan" and "The House of Morgan," the list includes "The Electrical Wizard" (Edison), "The Plant Wizard" (Burbank), "The Campers at Kitty Hawk" (Wright brothers), "The Happy Warrior" (Theodore Roosevelt), "The Boy Orator of the Platte" (William Jennings Bryan), "Meester Veelson" (Woodrow Wilson), "Playboy" (Jack Reed), "Lover of Mankind" (Eugene Debs), "Poor Little Rich Boy" (William Randolph Hearst), and "Power Superpower" (Samuel Insull). This biographer makes no pretense of objectivity, of ponderously weighing good and bad, of charitably pulling punches. Yet the secret of his method lies not in the falsification of facts but in the meticulous selection of details. Carefully he singles out only those threads which belong in the larger social tapestry of his novel; all others he discards. The final product is a study in compression, a lesson in literary economy. Now and then a passage may seem like nothing more than the familiar biographical dictionary entry tricked out in unfamiliar typography. But not for long. For Dos Passos has the senses of a poet and knows instinctively the connotation of a word, the rhythm of a phrase. At their best the little biographies in *U.S.A.* are a species of colloquial machine-age poetry.

FREDERICK WINSLOW TAYLOR (they called him Speedy Taylor in the shop) was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, the year of Buchanan's election. His father was a lawyer, his mother came from a family of New Bedford whalers; she was a great reader of Emerson, belonged to the Unitarian Church and the Browning Society. She was a fervent abolitionist and believed in democratic manners; she was a housekeeper of the old school, kept everybody busy from dawn till dark. She laid down the rules of conduct:

selfrespect, selfreliance, selfcontrol  
and a cold long head for figures.

But she wanted her children to appreciate the finer things so she took them abroad for three years on the Continent, showed them cathedrals, grand opera, Roman pediments, the old masters under their brown varnish in their great frames of tarnished gilt.

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Later Fred Taylor was impatient of these wasted years, stamped out of the room when people talked about the finer things; he was a testy youngster, fond of practical jokes and a great hand at rigging up contraptions and devices.

At Exeter he was head of his class and captain of the ballteam, the first man to pitch overhand. (When umpires complained that overhand pitching wasn't in the rules of the game, he answered that it got results.)

As a boy he had nightmares, going to bed was horrible for him; he thought they came from sleeping on his back. He made himself a leather harness with wooden pegs that stuck into his flesh when he turned over. When he was grown he slept in a chair or in bed in a sitting position propped up with pillows. All his life he suffered from sleeplessness.

He was a crackerjack tennisplayer. In 1881, with his friend Clark, he won the National Doubles Championship. (He used a spoonshaped racket of his own design.)

At school he broke down from overwork, his eyes went back on him. The doctor suggested manual labor. So instead of going to Harvard he went into the machinshop of a small pumpmanufacturing concern, owned by a friend of the family's, to learn the trade of patternmaker and machinist. He learned to handle a lathe and to dress and cuss like a workingman.

Fred Taylor never smoked tobacco or drank liquor or used tea or coffee; he couldn't understand why his fellowmechanics wanted to go on sprees and get drunk and raise Cain Saturday nights. He lived at home, when he wasn't reading technical books he'd play parts in amateur theatricals or step up to the piano in the evening and sing a good tenor in *A Warrior Bold* or *A Spanish Cavalier*.

He served his first year's apprenticeship in the machinshop without pay; the next two years he made a dollar and a half a week, the last year two dollars.

Pennsylvania was getting rich off iron and coal. When he was twenty-two, Fred Taylor went to work at the Midvale Iron Works. At first he had to take a clerical job, but he hated that and went to work with a shovel. At last he got them to put him on a lathe. He was a good machinist, he worked ten hours a day and in the evenings followed an engineering course at Stevens. In six years he rose from machinist's helper to keeper of toolcribs to gangboss to foreman to master mechanic



in charge of repairs to chief draftsman and director of research to chief engineer of the Midvale Plant.

The early years he was a machinist with the other machinists in the shop, cussed and joked and worked with the rest of them, soldiered on the job when they did. Mustn't give the boss more than his money's worth. But when he got to be foreman he was on the management's side of the fence, *gathering in on the part of those on the management's side all the great mass of traditional knowledge which in the past has been in the heads of the workmen and in the physical skill and knack of the workman*. He couldn't stand to see an idle lathe or an idle man.

Production went to his head and thrilled his sleepless nerves like liquor or women on a Saturday night. He never loafed and he'd be damned if anybody else would. Production was an itch under his skin.

He lost his friends in the shop; they called him niggerdriver. He was a stockily built man with a temper and a short tongue.

*I was a young man in years but I give you my word I was a great deal older than I am now, what with the worry, meanness and contemptibleness of the whole damn thing. It's a horrid life for any man to live not being able to look any workman in the face without seeing hostility there, and a feeling that every man around you is your virtual enemy.*

That was the beginning of the Taylor System of Scientific Management.

He was impatient of explanations, he didn't care whose hide he took off in enforcing the laws he believed inherent in the industrial process.

*When starting an experiment in any field question everything, question the very foundations upon which the art rests, question the simplest, the most selfevident, the most universally accepted facts; prove everything*, except the dominant Quaker Yankee (the New Bedford skippers were the greatest niggerdrivers on the whaling seas) rules of conduct. He boasted he'd never ask a workman to do anything he couldn't do.

He devised an improved steamhammer; he standardized tools and equipment, he filled the shop with college students with stopwatches and diagrams, tabulating, standardizing. *There's the right way of doing a thing and the wrong way of doing it; the right way means increased production, lower costs, higher wages, bigger profits*: the American plan.

He broke up the foreman's job into separate functions, speedbosses, gangbosses, timestudy men, orderofwork men.

The skilled mechanics were too stubborn for him, what he wanted

was a plain handyman who'd do what he was told. If he was a firstclass man and did firstclass work Taylor was willing to let him have firstclass pay; that's where he began to get into trouble with the owners.

At thirtyfour he married and left Midvale and took a flyer for the big money in connection with a pulpmill started in Maine by some admirals and political friends of Grover Cleveland's;

the panic of '93 made hash of that enterprise,

so Taylor invented for himself the job of Consulting Engineer in Management and began to build up a fortune by careful investments.

The first paper he read before the American Society of Mechanical Engineers was anything but a success, they said he was crazy. *I have found*, he wrote in 1909, *that any improvement is not only opposed but aggressively and bitterly opposed by the majority of men.*

He was called in by Bethlehem Steel. It was in Bethlehem he made his famous experiments with handling pigiron; he taught a Dutchman named Schmidt to handle fortyseven tons instead of twelve and a half tons of pigiron a day and got Schmidt to admit he was as good as ever at the end of the day.

He was a crank about shovels, every job had to have a shovel of the right weight and size for that job alone; every job had to have a man of the right weight and size for that job alone; but when he began to pay his men in proportion to the increased efficiency of their work,

the owners who were a lot of greedy smalleyed Dutchmen began to raise Hail Columbia; when Schwab bought Bethlehem Steel in 1901 Fred Taylor

inventor of efficiency

who had doubled the production of the stampingmill by speeding up the main lines of shafting from ninety-six to twohundred and twenty-five revolutions a minute

was unceremoniously fired.

After that Fred Taylor always said he couldn't afford to work for money.

He took to playing golf (using golfclubs of his own design), doping out methods for transplanting huge boxtrees into the garden of his home.

At Boxly in Germantown he kept open house for engineers, factory-managers, industrialists;

he wrote papers,

lectured in colleges,

appeared before a congressional committee,

everywhere preached the virtues of scientific management and the Barth slide rule, the cutting down of waste and idleness, the substitution for skilled mechanics of the plain handyman (like Schmidt the pigiron handler) who'd move as he was told

and work by the piece:

production;

more steel rails more bicycles more spools of thread more armorplate for battleships more bedpans more barbedwire more needles more lightningrods more ballbearings more dollarbills;

(the old Quaker families of Germantown were growing rich, the Pennsylvania millionaires were breeding billionaires out of iron and coal)

production would make every firstclass American rich who was willing to work at piecework and not drink or raise Cain or think or stand mooning at his lathe.

Thrifty Schmidt the pigiron handler can invest his money and get to be an owner like Schwab and the rest of the greedy smalleyed Dutchmen and cultivate a taste for Bach and have hundredyearold boxtrees in his garden at Bethlehem or Germantown or Chestnut Hill,

and lay down the rules of conduct;

the American plan.

But Fred Taylor never saw the working of the American plan;

in 1915 he went to the hospital in Philadelphia suffering from a breakdown.

Pneumonia developed; the nightnurse heard him winding his watch;

on the morning of his fiftyninth birthday, when the nurse went into his room to look at him at fourthirty,

he was dead with his watch in his hand.

# The House of Morgan

JOHN DOS PASSOS

*I commit my soul into the hands of my savior, wrote John Pierpont Morgan in his will, in full confidence that having redeemed it and washed it in His most precious blood, He will present it faultless before my heavenly father, and I intreat my children to maintain and defend at all hazard and at any cost of personal sacrifice the blessed doctrine of complete atonement for sin through the blood of Jesus Christ once offered and through that alone,*

and into the hands of the House of Morgan represented by his son, he committed,

when he died in Rome in 1913,

the control of the Morgan interests in New York, Paris and London, four national banks, three trust companies, three life insurance companies, ten railroad systems, three street railway companies, an express company, the International Mercantile Marine,

power,

on the cantilever principle, through interlocking directorates

over eighteen other railroads, U. S. Steel, General Electric, American Tel and Tel, five major industries;

the interwoven cables of the Morgan Stillman Baker combination held credit up like a suspension bridge, thirteen percent of the banking resources of the world.

The first Morgan to make a pool was Joseph Morgan, a hotelkeeper in Hartford Connecticut who organized stagecoach lines and bought up Ætna Life Insurance stock in a time of panic caused by one of the big New York fires in the 1830's;

his son Junius followed in his footsteps, first in the drygoods business, and then as partner to George Peabody, a Massachusetts banker who built up an enormous underwriting and mercantile business in London and became a friend of Queen Victoria;

Junius married the daughter of John Pierpont, a Boston preacher, poet, eccentric, and abolitionist; and their eldest son,

John Pierpont Morgan

arrived in New York to make his fortune

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after being trained in England, going to school at Vevey, proving himself a crack mathematician at the University of Göttingen, a lanky morose young man of twenty, just in time for the panic of '57.

(war and panics on the stock exchange, bankruptcies, warloans, good growing weather for the House of Morgan.)

When the guns started booming at Fort Sumter, young Morgan turned some money over reselling condemned muskets to the U.S. army and began to make himself felt in the gold room in downtown New York; there was more in trading in gold than in trading in muskets; so much for the Civil War.

During the Franco-Prussian war Junius Morgan floated a huge bond issue for the French government at Tours.

At the same time young Morgan was fighting Jay Cooke and the German-Jew bankers in Frankfort over the funding of the American war debt (he never did like the Germans or the Jews).

The panic of '75 ruined Jay Cooke and made J. Pierpont Morgan the boss croupier of Wall Street; he united with the Philadelphia Drexels and built the Drexel building where for thirty years he sat in his glassed-in office, redfaced and insolent, writing at his desk, smoking great black cigars, or, if important issues were involved, playing solitaire in his inner office; he was famous for his few words, Yes or No, and for his way of suddenly blowing up in a visitor's face and for that special gesture of the arm that meant, *What do I get out of it?*

In '77 Junius Morgan retired; J. Pierpont got himself made a member of the board of directors of the New York Central railroad and launched the first *Corsair*. He liked yachting and to have pretty actresses call him Commodore.

He founded the Lying-in Hospital on Stuyvesant Square, and was fond of going into St. George's church and singing a hymn all alone in the afternoon quiet.

In the panic of '93

at no inconsiderable profit to himself

Morgan saved the U.S. Treasury; gold was draining out, the country was ruined, the farmers were howling for a silver standard, Grover Cleveland and his cabinet were walking up and down in the blue room at the White House without being able to come to a decision, in Congress they were making speeches while the gold reserves melted in the Subtreasuries; poor people were starving; Coxey's army was marching to Washington; for a long time Grover Cleveland couldn't bring himself to call in the representative of the Wall Street moneymasters;

Morgan sat in his suite at the Arlington smoking cigars and quietly playing solitaire until at last the president sent for him; he had a plan all ready for stopping the gold hemorrhage.

After that what Morgan said went; when Carnegie sold out he built the Steel Trust.

J. Pierpont Morgan was a bullnecked irascible man with small black magpie's eyes and a growth on his nose; he let his partners work themselves to death over the detailed routine of banking, and sat in his back office smoking black cigars; when there was something to be decided he said Yes or No or just turned his back and went back to his solitaire.

Every Christmas his librarian read him Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* from the original manuscript.

He was fond of canarybirds and pekinese dogs and liked to take pretty actresses yachting. Each *Corsair* was a finer vessel than the last.

When he dined with King Edward he sat at His Majesty's right; he ate with the Kaiser *tête-à-tête*; he liked talking to cardinals or the pope, and never missed a conference of Episcopal bishops;

Rome was his favorite city.

He liked choice cookery and old wines and pretty women and yachting, and going over his collections, now and then picking up a jewelled snuffbox and staring at it with his magpie's eyes.

He made a collection of the autographs of the rulers of France, owned glass cases full of Babylonian tablets, seals, signets, statuettes, busts,

Gallo-Roman bronzes,

Merovingian jewels, miniatures, watches, tapestries, porcelains, cuneiform inscriptions, paintings by all the old masters, Dutch, Italian, Flemish, Spanish,

manuscripts of the gospels and the Apocalypse,

a collection of the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau,

and the letters of Pliny the Younger.

His collectors bought anything that was expensive or rare or had the glint of empire on it, and he had it brought to him and stared hard at it with his magpie's eyes. Then it was put in a glass case.

The last year of his life he went up the Nile on a *dahabiyeh* and spent a long time staring at the great columns of the Temple of Karnak.

The panic of 1907 and the death of Harriman, his great opponent in railroad financing, in 1909, had left him the undisputed ruler of Wall Street, most powerful private citizen in the world;

an old man tired of the purple, suffering from gout, he had deigned to go to Washington to answer the questions of the Pujo Committee during the Money Trust Investigation: Yes, I did what seemed to me to be for the best interests of the country.

So admirably was his empire built that his death in 1913 hardly caused a ripple in the exchanges of the world: the purple descended to his son, J. P. Morgan,

who had been trained at Groton and Harvard and by associating with the British ruling class

to be a more constitutional monarch: *J. P. Morgan suggests . . .*

By 1917 the Allies had borrowed one billion, ninehundred million dollars through the House of Morgan: we went overseas for democracy and the flag;

and by the end of the Peace Conference the phrase *J. P. Morgan suggests* had compulsion over a power of seventyfour billion dollars.

J. P. Morgan is a silent man, not given to public utterances, but during the great steel strike, he wrote Gary: *Heartfelt congratulations on your stand for the open shop, with which I am, as you know, absolutely in accord. I believe American principles of liberty are deeply involved, and must win if we stand firm.*

(Wars and panics on the stock exchange,  
machinegunfire and arson,  
bankruptcies, warloans,  
starvation, lice, cholera and typhus:  
good growing weather for the House of Morgan.)

# Mrs. James Madison

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

## CHRONOLOGY

*Dorothea Payne (Todd) Madison.*  
*Born, North Carolina, May 20, 1772.*  
*Removed to Philadelphia, 1783.*  
*Married John Todd, January 7, 1790.*  
*Married James Madison, September 15, 1794.*  
*Madison, Secretary of State, 1801-1809.*  
*Madison, President, 1809-1817.*  
*Retired to Montpelier, 1817.*  
*Madison died, June 28, 1836.*  
*Died, July 8, 1849.*

### I

THERE ARE CENTRIPETAL and centrifugal spirits, spirits which turn naturally within, however they may be forced without, which live interior lives, sometimes tormented and perturbed, sometimes sunny, tranquil, and serene, and spirits which shrink from themselves or forget themselves, finding their activity, if not their happiness, in the turmoil of the outward world. Assuredly Mrs. Madison's spirit was centrifugal, if any ever was. She loved life in all its whirl and movement. She had long, pleasant, even merry years of it. In the main outward good fortune waited upon her, with a varied if not always uninterrupted felicity, and she had in herself those rich resources of spiritual sunshine which give a golden tinge to even gray days and somber moments. A lady who had known her intimately for many years says of her when she was nearly sixty years old: "She certainly has always been and still is one of the happiest of human beings, . . . she seems to have no place about her which could afford a lodgment for care or trouble. Time seems to favor her as much as fortune."<sup>1</sup> John Quincy Adams reports much the same thing, in his dry, crusty fashion: "She is a woman of placid, equable temperament, and less susceptible of laceration by the

From *Wives*, by Gamaliel Bradford. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Brothers, publishers.

For introductory note on Gamaliel Bradford, see his "John Brown" above.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Smith to Mrs. Boyd, August 17, 1828. Smith, Mrs. Samuel Harrison, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society, Portrayed by the Family Letters of*, edited by Gaillard Hunt, p. 234.



scourges of the world abroad than most others."<sup>2</sup> But the Shakespearean way of touching such a temperament, as of touching anything, is the loveliest and most satisfying:

"Happy is your grace,  
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune  
Into so quiet and so sweet a style."

Dorothea—or Dolly—Payne Madison's external life was certainly varied and picturesque enough to involve any sort of experience. Her parents were well-to-do Virginians, but she was born, in 1772, when they were visiting North Carolina. Her father became affiliated with the Quakers and removed to Philadelphia when she was a girl. There she was brought up in Quaker surroundings and there, early in 1790, she married a young Quaker named John Todd. She bore two children, of whom the eldest, a boy, survived, and after a brief period of married life, her husband perished in the yellow-fever epidemic. In the autumn of 1794 she married Madison and was swept into the whirl of his political fortunes. For eight years she was the wife of the Secretary of State and practically the head of the national hospitality, since Jefferson was a widower. For another eight years she was the wife of the President. In 1817 she and her husband retired to Madison's estate, Montpelier, in Virginia, and they had no further connection with public life. But though retired, they were anything but solitary, and till her husband's death in 1836, and till her own in 1849, she was always the center of a crowding, hurrying, shifting pressure of human interest.

It is hardly fair to infer that the woman had no inner life because we hear nothing of it. But it is safe to assume that the rush of external impressions left her little time to brood upon her own soul, its nature or its workings. The brief records of conversation with her suggest little of inward experience; but they are brief. On the other hand, we have a considerable number of her letters and it must be confessed that they are distinctly external and trivial, the letters of a woman of the world, kindly, affectionate, tender, but not revealing much of spiritual activity and suggesting that there was not much to reveal. Occasionally she remarks that she is so shut up and has seen so few people that she has nothing to write.<sup>3</sup> Apparently it does not occur to her that the adventures of the soul may also have their interest.

She had the elements of the feminine education of that day, but little more, and she had never the time or the desire to educate herself in the field of books. Her letters give astonishingly little evidence

<sup>2</sup> John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs*, Vol. IX, p. 418, October 24, 1837.

<sup>3</sup> To Madison, October 28, 1805. *Memoirs*, p. 58. [Madison, Dolly, *Memoirs and Letters of*, edited by her grandniece.]

of any familiarity with the thought of the world. In later years she does ask for a novel: "By the bye, do you ever get hold of a clever novel, new or old, that you could send me? I bought Cooper's last, but did not care for it, because the story was so full of horrors."<sup>4</sup> She even pushes her enthusiasm so far as to call for the *Romance of History*.<sup>5</sup> But we do not hear that she got it or read it. Her knowledge of the human heart, which was probably extensive in its kind, was not obtained from books.

Nor did her Quaker training give her much in the way of accomplishments or prepare her for aesthetic enjoyment. The house at Montpelier was full of busts, paintings, and drawings, some of them by artists of high quality. She showed these things to her guests. Perhaps she enjoyed them herself. The only allusion to music is somewhat mechanical: "The music-box is playing beside me, and seems well adapted to solitude."<sup>6</sup> Montpelier was situated in a beautiful region and the natural beauty was heightened by art. She must have felt all this, but she does not speak of it. It is said that she was an ardent gardener and tended her flowers with much devotion. We have a charming picture of her, rising very early, while her visitors were asleep, and working in her long apron among the dewy blossoms.<sup>7</sup> She plucked them and then bestowed them lavishly upon her friends. For her existence seems to have been mainly one of give, give, give, give time, give goods, give life. As was said of another lady, of equally abundant temper, "she was too generous with herself." And giving is no doubt an excellent and charming thing. Only perhaps those give best who also sometimes take, at least a little.

Thus, if religion consists in charity and external kindness, it is evident that Mrs. Madison was rich in it, and certainly this is the part of religion that is most serviceable. Again, I should not undertake to deny that she had depths of spiritual experience. But there are no signs of it, and the signs are mainly the other way. In talk with Ticknor she defended the Quakers, as she would have defended any friend.<sup>8</sup> In mature years she was a faithful attendant upon the Episcopal service. But she had comparatively little suffering or depression to drive her to God, and she lived curiously remote in spirit from the evil of the world. When she hears of the burning of Mount Vernon, she exclaims

<sup>4</sup> To Dolly Cutts, March 19, 1830. *Memoirs*, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> To Dolly Cutts, November, 1830. *Memoirs*, p. 179.

<sup>6</sup> To Mary Cutts, December, 1831. *Memoirs*, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> Goodwin, Maud Wilder, *Dolly Madison*, p. 204.

<sup>8</sup> Ticknor to his father, January 21, 1815. George Ticknor, *Life, Letters, and Journals*, Vol. I, p. 30.

against "the wickedness of men and women."<sup>9</sup> But somehow it does not seem to touch her very directly. What is most noticeable about her spiritual attitude is a large and sweet tolerance, which she may have imbibed in part from her Quaker connections, but which I think was also largely owing to her husband and to her great friend, Thomas Jefferson. This open and sunny charity is by no means the worst of religions, though perhaps even Jefferson would have been hardly ready to accept Anatole France's charming formulation of it: "Tolerance is so dear to me that I would sacrifice for it even the sweetest of beliefs."

## II

And so Mrs. Madison's life is to be studied chiefly in her relations to other human beings, and we may begin with the nearest, her husband, or husbands. As to the first, John Todd, we know less than we could wish, and we are not even quite clear as to Dolly's feeling about him. It is said that she was averse to the marriage and only yielded to pressure from her father; but such stories count for little. In any case, there is sufficient evidence of later affection and Todd appears to have been a sober, manly, hard-working, devoted fellow who would have made her happy if he had lived. Her circumstances after his death are again somewhat doubtful; but for a time she lived with her mother, who, in Dolly's delicate phrase, "after my father's death received into her house some gentlemen as boarders."<sup>10</sup> Among these boarders was Aaron Burr, and it would seem as if a beautiful young widow might have been a tempting morsel for Burr's universal rapacity. Nothing of the sort appears, however, and instead, Madison selected Burr as the means of getting himself introduced to the lady who had attracted his attention. We have the brief note in which Dolly announced the event: "Dear friend, thou must come to me. Aaron Burr says that the 'great little Madison' has asked to be brought to see me this evening."<sup>11</sup> He came, and the courtship progressed rapidly.

In Mrs. Todd's acceptance of this new suitor there was probably a complication of motives. He was twenty years older than she. He had previously made unsuccessful attempts at marriage, the lady in one case having lightly tossed him aside for a showy young parson. Though Madison's face was distinguished and even handsome, he was far from imposing in appearance, and in later life Irving said of him, "Poor

<sup>9</sup> To Anna Cutts, June, 1804. *Memoirs*, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> To Mrs. Smith, August 31, 1834. *Smith*, p. 352.

<sup>11</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 15.

Jemmy! he is but a withered little apple-john."<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, he was already prominent politically and seemed destined to be more so, and there was a rather remarkable similarity of temperament between the two. Dolly may not have conceived a romantic passion for him, but she cherished a warm, sincere affection which lasted all his life.

And Madison thoroughly deserved it. He played a great part in his country's history, and on the whole played it adequately. It must be understood at the start that he was essentially an intellectualist, a thinker rather than a doer. From his youth he read widely, and thought widely also, if not always very deeply. The critical value of this broad and temperate study in the building of the national Constitution was immense, and Madison's sober and solidly reasoned judgment most ably balanced and sustained the ardent enthusiasm of Hamilton. When it came to executive government later, the intellectualist was somewhat less successful, and the ill-managed War of 1812 did not help his reputation, while his naturally impartial and judicial temper became more or less involved in the party passions of the time. Still, even in this regard he was much more moderate than Jefferson, and in the main he will always stand in history as a wise, discreet, and luminous spirit. I like, as coming from that source, his wife's summary of his qualities in her letter to Jackson after her husband's death: "He, who had never lost sight of that consistency, symmetry, and beauty of character in all its parts, which rendered his own transcendent as a whole and worthy of the best aspirations."<sup>13</sup>

This summary, however, omits the charming humor which rendered Madison delightful in private intercourse. In public he was formal and conventional enough; but with his intimates he had a graceful gayety which seems rarely to have failed. Indeed, it clung to him to the very last. In his fatal illness a friend begged him not to try to talk in his enforced recumbent position. He answered, summing up the career of the statesman and diplomat, "Oh, I always talk most easily when I lie."<sup>14</sup> And his credibly reported dying words have a grace and significance which seldom appear in such a situation. On the morning of his death his niece gave him his breakfast and, observing that he had difficulty in swallowing, asked, "What is the matter, Uncle James?" "Nothing more than a change of mind, my dear."<sup>15</sup> Shortly after he was dead.

<sup>12</sup> Pierre M. Irving, *The Life and Letters of Washington Irving*, Vol. I, p. 263.

<sup>13</sup> July 10, 1836. *Memoirs*, p. 200.

<sup>14</sup> Goodwin, p. 246.

<sup>15</sup> Hunt, in his account of Madison's death (*Life of Madison*, p. 385), disregards this speech, reported by Jennings (*A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, p. 20); but it seems to me that the words can hardly have been invented, though there may be question as to the precise moment of their utterance.

It is generally supposed that Mrs. Madison was not closely involved in her husband's political interests. This is probably true. At the same time, there are bits in her letters which seem to indicate that she followed the general currents of the time with intelligent attention, and her husband's letters to her also show that he confided in her and trusted her. I relish particularly the mixture of public and intimately feminine concern which appears in the following passage referring to the movement of ships of war: "No *Constitution* heard of yet; the *Hornet* went to take despatches and to let them know our determination to fight for our rights. I wrote by the *Hornet* to Mrs. Barlow and begged her to send me anything she thought suitable in the way of millinery."<sup>16</sup> But in another letter she writes to Madison himself with a simplicity, sweetness, and dignity which would be becoming to any wife in any age: "You know I am not much of a politician, but I am extremely anxious to hear (as far as you think proper) what is going forward in the Cabinet. On this subject I believe you would not desire your wife to be the active partisan that our neighbor is, Mrs. L., nor will there be the slightest danger, while she is conscious of her want of talents, and the diffidence in expressing those opinions, always imperfectly understood by her sex."<sup>17</sup>

It is again a query how far the wife shared and stimulated her husband's political ambition. That she liked and appreciated his high standing and office is evident enough. What woman would not? But it seems quite clear that she early made up her mind that her part in the matter was social. She would see to it that the Madisons were generally known and well beloved, that the rancor of party was softened as much as possible in social relations, and most admirably and successfully did she labor to that end.

Nor is there any direct proof that she often endeavored to exert her influence for political purposes. If she put her friends into office, we do not hear of it. In 1806 and 1807 there was a rather sharp rivalry between Madison and Monroe for the presidential succession and Mrs. Madison is said to have spoken bitterly about Monroe.<sup>18</sup> Also, at that period, John Randolph, who was for the moment a Monroe partisan, writes to his candidate of his rival, as follows: "There is another consideration which I know not how to touch. You, my dear sir, cannot be ignorant—although of all mankind you, perhaps, have the least cause to know it—how deeply the respectability of any character may be impaired by an unfortunate matrimonial connection—I can pursue this subject no

<sup>16</sup> To Anna Cutts, December 20, 1811. *Memoirs*, p. 73.

<sup>17</sup> November 1, 1805. *Memoirs*, p. 60.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted from John Quincy Adams, in William Cabell Bruce, *The Life of John Randolph of Roanoke*, Vol. I, p. 338.

further."<sup>19</sup> What Randolph meant he does not explain, nor can anyone else. On the other hand, Blaine, writing at a later period, says: "Mrs. Madison saved the administration of her husband, held him back from the extremes of Jeffersonism, and enabled him to escape from the terrible dilemma of the War of '12. But for her, De Witt Clinton would have been chosen President in 1812."<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it would be as difficult to substantiate this claim as to support the insinuations of Randolph. But it is probable that the wife's broad, kindly, and tolerant temper, so akin to his own, sustained and strengthened the husband in a habitual attitude of lenience and generosity.

Mrs. Madison's most intense and direct contact with politics undoubtedly came during the trying years of the war. She may not have taken great interest in the more abstract aspects of the matter; but there were personal features that could not but come home to her. There were too brief moments of triumph, chiefly in connection with the brilliant naval operations. One bit of anecdote focuses the twinkling gleams of glory in an effective manner. A great ball was given in Washington, to celebrate the captures of the *Alert* and the *Guerrière*. In the midst of all the gayety Lieutenant Paul Hamilton arrived with the news of the taking of the *Macedonian* and bearing her flag. He was ushered into the hall with shouts of joy and congratulation, and presented the flag to Mrs. Madison before it was hung on the wall with those of the other captured vessels.<sup>21</sup>

One likes to afford her at least this fleeting instant of enjoyment, for the remainder of the war period was largely a time of anxiety and annoyance. The culmination came in the British seizure of the capital. Such a disaster was hardly looked for, even up to the last moment. Mrs. Madison sat in the White House, waiting for the return of her husband and the Cabinet, who had gone out to see the fighting. Dinner was on the table,<sup>22</sup> and every one expected a safe, if not a triumphant result. Then a messenger came hurrying in with word that the British were advancing and the White House must be abandoned in the utmost haste. Mrs. Madison gathered up what she could and went. The story that she herself cut the portrait of Washington from the frame will probably never be quite disposed of, though she could not have done it, as the picture could be reached only by a ladder and was removed under

<sup>19</sup> September 16, 1806, *The Writings of James Monroe* (edition Hamilton), Vol. IV, p. 487.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Goodwin, p. 142.

<sup>21</sup> The details of this incident have been a matter of dispute. But I think, as I give it, it is well authenticated. See Schouler's *History of the United States*, Vol. II, p. 371; McMaster's *History of the United States*, Vol. IV, pp. 82, 83; and Goodwin, pp. 156-158.

<sup>22</sup> McMaster, *History*, Vol. IV, p. 143, disputes this; but Jennings, *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, p. 10, seems to give good evidence of it.

her directions by the servants.<sup>23</sup> But she took the valuables that seemed to her most essential and hurried in her carriage across the Potomac, seeking refuge with friends, while her home and her possessions were destroyed almost before her eyes. In a short time it was all over, the British had retired, and she was able to go back. But the shock and strain of it must have been severe, and such agonizing memories made peace doubly welcome, when at last it came.

Through all these agitations, and through all the varied experiences of a long career, it is evident that Madison clung to his wife with constant and untroubled affection. He was a man who, for all his public activity, loved home and domestic tenderness, and he appreciated them where he found them. And the wife's affection for her husband is equally undisputed. They had no children, and though they both were fondly attached to the son by her first marriage, they both felt that they had little in the world besides each other. High-wrought romantic ardor was hardly in Dolly's nature; but perhaps she was all the more capable of a gentle glow of persistent devotion. When she is obliged by illness and the need of treatment to leave her husband's side, she longs for him. She is unable to sleep from anxiety about him, she says, and she emphasizes the grief "I feel at even so short a separation from one who is all in all to me."<sup>24</sup> When she is well and with him, without relatives and friends to distract her, she writes, "You may imagine me the very shadow of my husband."<sup>25</sup> In later years, during his long illness, she is most faithful in attendance, and for months she remains near at hand, ready to minister to all his wants. After his death she clings to the tradition of his glory, and I like especially her desperate determination to save his papers when they were threatened by fire. It is true that the papers represented a substantial money value when she sorely needed it, but they represented far more than money, the memory of past glory and delight. How vivid is the picture of her, suddenly awakened from sound sleep, with the smoke swirling about her, but refusing to be saved till the servants had gathered together the precious papers, and then, when the fire was extinguished, "laughingly returning, clad in a black velvet gown and nightcap, with bare feet."<sup>26</sup>

### III

This episode, together with her conduct during the British invasion and in many other instances, proves that Mrs. Madison was no weakling, given over to merely external diversions, however she may have

<sup>23</sup> See McMaster, *History*, Vol. IV, p. 141; Jennings, p. 15; Goodwin, p. 175.

<sup>24</sup> October 23, 1805. *Memoirs*, p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> To Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, 1811. *Memoirs*, p. 88.

<sup>26</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 208.

liked the flutter and turmoil of the outer world. She was perfectly capable of a firm and quiet self-possession and she had a solid, though dignified, gift for managing herself and others. She swayed her household skillfully and successfully for many years, and seems to have had all the qualities necessary to do so. Her health was not at all times perfect, and when illness overcame her she fell very briefly into a tone of discouragement. But in the main she had ample vigor, which lasted into advanced life, as is shown in the pretty story of her athletic accomplishments when she was sixty. "One time on the portico, she took Anna by the hand, saying: 'Come, let us run a race. I do not believe you can outrun me. Madison and I often run races here when the weather does not allow us to walk.' And she really did run very briskly."<sup>27</sup> The picture of the fourth ex-President of the United States and his wife running rainy-day races when they were approaching three and four score has a peculiar gayety.

To have carried on such a vast establishment as hers at all obviously required a good deal of executive experience. Madison himself had a natural instinct of order and system; but he left the domestic management mainly to her, and she was altogether adequate to it. A contemporary writer says: "Everything that came beneath her immediate and personal sway, the care and entertainment of visitors, the government of servants, the whole policy of the interior, was admirably managed with equal grace and efficacy."<sup>28</sup>

I should like a little more light on the question of servants. These were, of course, all, or almost all, slaves, and there seems to have been the horde of them usual in large Virginian establishments at that time. Miss Martineau gives a striking account of the luxury of service in the Madison household: "During all our conversations one or another slave was perpetually coming to Mrs. Madison for the great bunch of keys; two or three more lounged about in the house, leaning against the door posts or the corner of the sofa; and the attendance of others was no less indefatigable in my own apartment."<sup>29</sup> The colored man Jennings, who lived long in the family, both slave and free, declares that Madison himself was always lenient and gentle, would never strike a slave or allow any one else to do so,<sup>30</sup> and it is said that the servants turned rather to him than to his wife.<sup>31</sup> But this was natural enough, since the domestic discipline must have rested chiefly with her. Her own maid, when told by Mrs. Smith that she had a good mistress, answered with

<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Smith to Mrs. Boyd, August 17, 1828. Smith, p. 237.

<sup>28</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 156.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Goodwin, p. 233.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Jennings, *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Gaillard Hunt, *Life of James Madison*, p. 381.



the greatest warmth: "Yes, the best, I believe, in the world. I am sure I would not change her for any mistress in the whole country."<sup>32</sup>

The crucial question in all these domestic matters is money, and here it cannot be said that Mrs. Madison distinguished herself quite so much as in some other aspects. It is notable that the three great Virginian Presidents who followed Washington and Adams were all unfortunate in money matters, all lived with a rather unwarrantable profusion, and all died poor or left embarrassed estates. Madison himself was not inclined to personal extravagance. Jennings even tells us that his master "never had but one suit at a time. He had some poor relatives that he had to help, and wished to set them an example of economy in the matter of dress."<sup>33</sup> But both he and his wife were accustomed to Virginian hospitality, and their position in Washington and at Montpelier almost necessitated vast and constant entertaining, which could not be carried on without expense. They had numbers of guests at table, and the table was always bountifully supplied. Critics from abroad even suggested that the display in this regard approached the vulgar; but Mrs. Madison laughed and said that Europeans might consider that scarcity was elegance, but that the exhaustless wealth of our country was best shown in liberal entertainment.<sup>34</sup> Yet it all cost money. The wines at least had to be imported from niggard Europe, and niggard Europe charged a round price for them. Then if you had guests, you had to have furniture. The White House was large, and the house at Montpelier far from small, and the rooms had to be made and kept habitable, and it could not be done for nothing. Also, to come and go everywhere, you had to have conveyances. Coaches did not cost like limousines, but they cost enough, more than it was always convenient for a hard-pressed Virginia planter to pay.

And there was giving as well as spending—giving to relatives, giving to friends, giving to the world at large. Mrs. Madison was interested in various charities; she was ready and anxious to extend her kindness to all who came within reach of it. It is said that during the war, whenever soldiers marched by, "she always sent out and invited them to take wine and refreshments, giving them liberally of the best in the house."<sup>35</sup> Such cordial acts are charming, but they do have their effect on the bills.

Consequently Madison, even in his more flourishing period, was more or less embarrassed. There was money to be had, but it did not always come easily or at once. "He lived like a rich man," says his biographer,

<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Smith's Note-Book, August 4, 1809. Smith, p. 83.

<sup>33</sup> P. 19.

<sup>34</sup> Laura C. Holloway, *The Ladies of the White House*, p. 178.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Jennings, *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, p. 16.

"but his payments were not always made promptly. Mr. Voss had occasionally to remind him that his rent was overdue, and sometimes a creditor politely dunned him; but a number of friends owed money to him, and he was never charged with avoiding his pecuniary obligations."<sup>36</sup> While it is said that his wife was a good financial manager—and she probably was—it is not likely that she was a great force for thrift.

After her husband's death the situation was by no means improved. In fact, the pressure was so great that, if the stories are to be believed, she was reduced to absolute need. Jennings says that she "sometimes suffered for the necessities of life. While I was a servant to Mr. Webster, he often sent me to her with a market-basket full of provisions, and told me whenever I saw anything in the house that I thought she was in need of to take it to her. I often did this and occasionally gave her small sums from my own pocket."<sup>37</sup> It would take a sunny disposition indeed to endure this sort of thing patiently; but it did not last, as Congress relieved the distress of the ex-President's widow by purchasing his papers and putting the money paid into trust for her benefit.

It must at least be remembered, however, that Mrs. Madison's fault was not self-indulgence, and that, if she ruined herself, it was largely for the sake of those she loved. She was devoted to her relatives. Her younger sister lived with her almost as a daughter, and the letters written to her after her marriage are full of penetrating tenderness: "Anna, I'm dying to come to your country. If I could only be with you, how glad I should be."<sup>38</sup> She was equally attached to her nieces and turned to them in later years with a clinging affection. It is said that at first the Madisons felt that her own family predominated among her guests and that she was inclined to make more of her relatives than of his.<sup>39</sup> But she soon disposed of this criticism and proved that she had quite tenderness enough for all. One of the most charming things about her is her devotion to Madison's mother, who lived on at Montpelier to the age of ninety-seven. In speaking of her daughter-in-law's care and solicitude, the old lady said to a friend: "In other respects I am feeble and helpless, and owe everything to her: she is my mother now."<sup>40</sup>

The greatest burden on Mrs. Madison's purse and on her thoughts was undoubtedly the son of her first marriage, Payne Todd. Payne seems to have been a handsome and attractive boy, and his stepfather

<sup>36</sup> Gaillard Hunt, *Life of James Madison*, p. 275.

<sup>37</sup> Jennings, p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> March 22, 1804. *Memoirs*, p. 46.

<sup>39</sup> Gaillard Hunt, *Life of James Madison*, p. 245.

<sup>40</sup> Goodwin, p. 208.

was almost as fond of him as his mother was. But he received more fondness than discipline. His education was erratic, and the great position of his parents gave him social advantages and social temptations which he was but ill-fitted to resist. His temper was rather easy and self-indulgent than vicious; but the results were much the same. He drank, he spent, he gambled, and then the father and mother were called upon to pay his debts. His mother's letters, as printed, have no bitterness, and if there is reproach in them, it is so gentle that it merely emphasizes her affection. "Everyone inquires after you; but, my dear son, it seems to be the wonder of them all that you should stay away from us for so long a time. And now I am ashamed to tell, when asked, how long my only child has been absent from the home of his mother."<sup>41</sup> To the criticism of friends and enemies she had but the one mother's answer: "My poor boy! Forgive his eccentricities, for his heart is right."<sup>42</sup> To her the heart was all. And maternal pity and anxiety seem to be the last emotions that hovered about her in this world, for as she was dying, she was heard to murmur repeatedly, "My poor boy!"<sup>43</sup> Yet even this constant trial could not essentially sour her or shadow the sweetness of her spirit. That serenity and good humor, which her friend Jefferson esteemed the most valuable of all human gifts and qualities<sup>44</sup> and which perhaps in the beginning spoiled her son, made her suffer less than some might have suffered over the results of the spoiling.

## IV

Moreover, from this misery, as from others, she sought refuge in the amusing tumult of the world. The analysis of the social motive, the impulse which drives men and women into the crowding bustle of their fellows, as against the peaceful attractions of their own firesides, is curious though perhaps not altogether profitable. There is first, and, as we like to think, foremost, the element of kindness, of real human sympathy and kinship with other human hearts, and this is usually present in some degree, and cannot be wholly discounted. But there are other elements less amiable, in most cases, if not in all, and it is doubtful whether simple human fellowship would drive many of us over our thresholds quite so often as we go. There is the element of pure curiosity. We are always impelled to saturate the emptiness of our own lives with the petty details of the lives of others. What gown did Mrs. Jones wear? Did she really dismiss her cook? What did her husband

<sup>41</sup> December 2, 1824. *Memoirs*, p. 167.

<sup>42</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 207.

<sup>43</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 210.

<sup>44</sup> Jefferson to Rush, January 3, 1808. *Works* (Memorial Edition, 1903), Vol. XI, p. 413.

say when he found unexpected guests at dinner? These are minor matters, but they ruffle the surface of existence and prevent us from seeing too far into the murky depths. Then there are the varying forms of subtle egotism to take us out into the world. There is the altruistic motive. We want to be of use, to do something, to help somebody. The deepest impulse of the ego to project itself perhaps shows in the cry, "I want the world to be better for my having lived in it." Or there is the simple pleasure of self-assertion, without any altruistic excuse whatever. We have gifts and powers and charms and attractions; we think we have, we hope we have. If we have, why not display them, why not indulge in the delight of having others tell us so? Their assurance, even though we suspect it to be somewhat false and flattering, is a great support to our own. Finally, perhaps the strongest of all social motives is the sheer desire to escape from ourselves. Even when our own society has charm, it is possible to be surfeited with it. And for most of us solitude is crowded with thoughts and vain desires and long regrets, from which almost any escape is often welcome. Only, there are people so fortunately constituted that when they go among others they instantly forget themselves, flow out instinctively into the movement and the life that are going on about them. There are others who carry self with them wherever they go, and who find the monster more intrusive, the greater the bustle and hurry in which they live; to such, self is the greatest of social obstacles, and, go where they will, they cannot escape it.

Whatever the motive for social activity, there can be no question as to the force of habit in regard to it. There is the habit of going, and the habit of home. Go, and you will wish to go. Stay, and going will in the end become irksome and distasteful. A week's trial will establish this truth for anyone. When you have passed a peaceful week at home with work and books, you wonder why you ever stir out. As the author of the *Imitation* expresses it, in his crystal language, which even a high-school freshman can understand yet the greatest scholar cannot render with all its clinging savor: "*Cella continuata dulcescit; et male custodita tædium generat.*"

And it is certain that Mrs. Madison had the habit of going. No doubt she had quite sufficient dignity and self-control to accept solitude when circumstances imposed it upon her. But her natural bent was centrifugal, to turn always outward to the swift commerce of the world. This bent, I think, was almost too strong for her to form and maintain intimate friendships; she was too generally expansive for them. It may be that married women rarely have such friendships, anyway, except as they hold over from premarital youth. The shadow of a husband,

always likely to overhear the most intimate confidences, naturally affects such confidences with a sort of chilling reserve. At any rate, I see no sign of close friendships in Mrs. Madison's case, and we have no letters of personal outpouring to anyone but her own family, if even with them it may be called such. Yet it is clear that she had the qualities that make for friendship: directness, sincerity, cordiality. When Mrs. Smith visits her, the visitor is taken at once into the inmost family life. "No restraint, no ceremony. Hospitality is the presiding genius of this house, and Mrs. Madison is kindness personified."<sup>45</sup> She was willing to give herself, if you could take it; but it had to be snatched in passing, for always it was on the way somewhere else.

And she did enjoy a crowd, liked to live in the tide, in the flood, to have people coming and going about her perpetually: "You know, I usually like the routs all too well."<sup>46</sup> There was once a lady who said, as did Charles Lamb, that she should be glad to meet and talk for a few minutes with everybody in the world, and the same lady declared that she never saw a visitor coming to her door without being pleased, a statement which might provoke some cynical persons to the assertion of the exact opposite. But clearly Mrs. Madison had precisely the temper of that lady. When she was in Washington, either entertaining for Jefferson or as mistress of the White House, it might be expected that she would be the center of ever-shifting throngs, and of course she was. Guests of all sorts crowded about her, and she had a word and a smile and a heart for all of them. But when she retired into the country, it was very much the same. It is true that Montpelier was by natural environment a solitary place. But the genius of Mrs. Madison constantly contrived to fill it. There were swarms of relatives, there were swarms of Virginians, there were swarms of her husband's political associates, with not a few of differing opinions mixed in; and no stranger of importance came from Europe without visiting both Monticello and Montpelier. A few more or less could make no possible difference. When Mrs. Smith arrived, the hostess asked why she did not bring her little girls. Mrs. Smith had feared they might be troublesome. But the lady laughed: "I should not have known they were here among all the rest, for at this moment we have only three and twenty in the house." "Three and twenty!" cried Mrs. Smith. "And where do you store them?"

"Oh, we have house room in plenty."<sup>47</sup> And where house room failed, heart room made up for it. Ninety to dine "at one table—put

<sup>45</sup> Mrs. Smith's Note-Book, August 4, 1809. Smith, p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> To Anna Cutts, July 31, 1805. *Memoirs*, p. 173.

<sup>47</sup> Mrs. Smith's Note-Book, August 4, 1809. Smith, p. 81.

up on the lawn under a thick arbor,"<sup>48</sup> was a casual occurrence. Even after her husband's death, it was much the same: she was still the center of a throng of people, people of all sorts who observed her curiously and were observed by her and made life twinkle and sparkle up to the very verge of the grave.

After this elaborate development of the Book of Numbers, it is hardly necessary to say that she was a social success. In her youth she seems to have been very beautiful. People stopped to look at her in the street and a friend remonstrated with her, laughingly, "Really, Dolly, thou must hide thy face, there are so many staring at thee."<sup>49</sup> And the beauty appears to have been of a lasting sort, a matter of grace and charm which endure through the changing years. She understood the art of dress. Sometimes she clung to early Quaker simplicity, and again she sought the aid of all the fashions, appearing in silks and satins, feathers and the turbans which seem so odd to us at present. Also, there were what would appear to some of us drawbacks to her charm. She used paint and powder with a freedom and constancy which her great-granddaughters might envy—used them skillfully and without excess, say some; but there was a grim Federalist parson who visited her and declared with rude vigor: "Mrs. Madison, though originally of a Quaker family, was dressed very splendidly, with a crown on her head. Her face and neck were obviously daubed with paint so as fairly to glisten."<sup>50</sup> Also, she had the even more deplorable habit of using snuff. Theodosia Burr visited her in 1803 and says, "She is still pretty; but, oh, the unfortunate propensity to snuff-taking."<sup>51</sup> And there is the homely anecdote in connection with Henry Clay, not uncharacteristic, though perhaps not of the surest authenticity. Mrs. Madison offered Clay a pinch, which he accepted in his usual dignified manner. Then she "put her hand into her pocket and pulling out a bandanna handkerchief, said, 'Mr. Clay, this is for rough work,' at the same time applying it in the proper place, 'and this,' producing a fine lace handkerchief from another pocket, 'is my polisher.' She suited the action to the words, removing from her nose the remaining grains of snuff."<sup>52</sup> Truly, other times, other manners.

Yet these things do not seem to have greatly diminished the lady's attraction, and one of the most delightful stories about her is the remark of an admirer, who was defending her against the charge of

<sup>48</sup> To Anna Cutts, July 5, 1820. *Memoirs*, p. 173.

<sup>49</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> *Memoirs of Reverend Dr. John Pierce*, December 23, 1812, in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, Series II, Vol. XIX, p. 377.

<sup>51</sup> Theodosia to her father, in Davis, *Memoirs of Aaron Burr*, Vol. II, p. 242.

<sup>52</sup> Laura C. Holloway, *The Ladies of the White House*, p. 200.

vanity. "But you tell me she used rouge and powder." "Yes, yes," said the admirer, "she did; but it was to please and gratify those who were thrown with her, not because she was fond of admiration."<sup>53</sup> Which recalls the character in the French comedy who was accused of vanity because he looked constantly in the glass: "It is not vanity, but simply because it gives me such pleasure to look at myself."

And apparently her popularity was almost universal, as universal as popularity can ever be in this critical world. I have searched quite widely for fault-finding, but discover astonishingly little. Now and then a note of dissonance does occur. Her friend Mrs. Smith, after a paragraph of ecstatic praise, makes this comment, which I do not in the least understand: "Ah, why does she not in all things act with the same propriety? She would be too much beloved if she added all the virtues to all the graces."<sup>54</sup> Seward, who was inclined to be censorious, protests against her social prominence in later years: "All the world paid homage to her, saying that she was dignified and attractive. It is the fashion to say so. But, I confess, I thought more true dignity would have been displayed by her remaining, in her widowhood, in the ancient country mansion of her illustrious husband."<sup>55</sup> And again: "I had little opportunity, however, to judge of Mrs. Madison. But her dress, conversation, air, and everything showed me that she was a woman to whom fashion was necessary in her old age."<sup>56</sup> Yet this querulousness is rare. The general tone of admiration and affection among her friends appears in the words of Mrs. Smith: "It seems to me that such manners would disarm envy itself, and conciliate even enemies";<sup>57</sup> and the colored man Jennings gives the same testimony as to inferiors, "She was beloved by everybody in Washington, white and colored."<sup>58</sup>

And she enjoyed the popularity, and why should she not? Her husband was sometimes bored and wearied with it. At the first inauguration ball, in 1809, he confided to Mrs. Smith, "I would much rather be in bed."<sup>59</sup> After the same grand occasion, which might probably be regarded as the acme of American social entertainment, Mrs. Smith herself, a young and eager woman, notes, "Never do I recollect one night retiring with such a vacuum, such a dissatisfied craving, such a restlessness of spirit, such undefined, vague desires, as I do now."<sup>60</sup> But we get nothing of this sort from Mrs. Madison. The rush of people

<sup>53</sup> *Id.*, p. 203.

<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Smith to Susan B. Smith, 1809. Smith, p. 62.

<sup>55</sup> Seward to Weed, January 24, 1846. Seward's *Autobiography*, Vol. I, p. 781.

<sup>56</sup> Seward to Weed, January 4, 1846. *Id.*, p. 772.

<sup>57</sup> To Susan B. Smith, March, 1809. Smith, p. 62.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Jennings, *A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison*, p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Smith to Susan B. Smith, March, 1809. Smith, p. 63.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

was the breath of life to her, and the emptiness came when she was cut off from it. When she is ill, she does murmur a little, "We have had a continual round of company, which has been burdensome."<sup>61</sup> But even in illness people help rather than hinder. And, to be sure, in such a vast human contact there were bound to be disagreeable incidents. There was the evening when President Jefferson insisted on throwing over etiquette and giving her precedence of the wife of the British minister, which caused a storm, as Mrs. Madison foresaw it would. Again, when she fled from her burning home and tried to take refuge with a former acquaintance, all the welcome she got was: "Mis' Madison! if that's you, come down and go out! Your husband has got mine out fighting, and, damn you, you shan't stay in my house; so get out."<sup>62</sup>

But these jarring notes were few and rare, since she had in such an eminent degree the social qualities which subdue or avert them. One such quality, indeed, seems not to have been present to any great degree: she was not a brilliant or witty talker. The best that a keen observer like Ticknor can find to say of her in this line is, "Her conversation was somewhat formal, but on the whole appropriate to her position and now and then amusing."<sup>63</sup> Yet clever talking, like Madame de Staël's or Madame du Deffand's, often hurts rather than helps. Mrs. Madison knew how to ask kindly questions, and to smooth asperities. She hated argument and gently got rid of it: "I would rather fight with my hands than my tongue."<sup>64</sup> As to the latter member, she early devoted herself to the most important of lessons: "I am learning to hold my tongue well."<sup>65</sup>

In other words, she was by nature and by vast experience a mistress of the exquisite art of social tact, knew how to adapt herself to people and how to adapt people to each other. She entered into the lives of others, into the hearts of others, knowing that what went on there was very much what went on in her own, and using the knowledge for the increased comfort and happiness of everybody. I relish one little anecdote which shows how such a social being will instinctively follow Sarah Ripley's admirable principle that the law of love is higher than the law of truth. In her old age, when it was difficult for her to write, Mrs. Madison taught her niece to imitate her own writing so that friends might feel that they were getting letters directly from herself.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> To Anna Cutts, June 3, 1804. Goodwin, p. 47.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Jennings, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> To his father, January 21, 1815. George Ticknor, *Life, Letters, and Journals*, Vol. I, p. 30.

<sup>64</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 84.

<sup>65</sup> To Anna Cutts, May 22, 1804. *Memoirs*, p. 46.

<sup>66</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 44.



But by far the best and noblest testimony to Mrs. Madison's social tact is the remark of her niece in regard to her, "I always thought better of myself when I had been with Aunt Dolly."<sup>67</sup> How many people there are of whom the reverse is true! And can there be a higher triumph of social achievement?

One of the most notable concrete elements in Mrs. Madison's social tact was her remarkable memory. It is said that, with all her vast acquaintance, she rarely forgot a face or a name: "Possessing a most retentive memory, she never miscalled a name, or forgot the slightest incident connected with the personal history of anyone, and therefore impressed each individual with an idea of his importance in her esteem."<sup>68</sup> She would probably have agreed with General Lee, who possessed a similar gift, that it was no special mental endowment, but simply a matter of courteous attention to everybody, thus confirming the theory of Lord Chesterfield, that a discreet, quick, constant attention is the first and most important of social principles.

However this may be, it is interesting to think what a vast personal storehouse the woman's memory must have been, how thronged with faces of all sorts, faces quick, gay, delightful, no doubt sometimes distorted or hideous, but always interesting. And the memory clung by her to the end, and the people clung by her to the end. As Philip Hone recorded in his *Journal*, in 1842, "She is a *young* lady of fourscore [threescore and ten] years and upward, goes to parties and receives company, like the 'Queen of this new world.'"<sup>69</sup> And finding her own life thus in the busy life that was whirling all about her, she was able to keep up to the end that impression of felicity—felicity of circumstances, and still more of temperament, which is always associated with her. Yet her final comment, on leaving this earth, on which she had lived so widely, was, "My dear, do not trouble about it; there is nothing in *this* world worth really caring for."<sup>70</sup> And I should like to know whether it is true that she emphasized *this*; but in any case there are not many men or women who have been in a better position for making such a statement.

<sup>67</sup> Goodwin, p. 73.

<sup>68</sup> Laura C. Holloway, *The Ladies of the White House*, p. 177.

<sup>69</sup> Philip Hone, *Diary*, Vol. II, p. 121, March 15, 1842.

<sup>70</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 209.

# Catherine Gladstone

PHILIP GUEDALLA

*Ann (looking at him with fond pride and caressing his arm): Never mind her, dear. Go on talking.—MAN AND SUPERMAN.*

THE AIR OF 1839 WAS HEAVY with impending nuptials. In the bright dawn of a new reign matrimony swept over England like a genial epidemic, and the land was loud with banns. For the Queen's hand was asked and given; and, inspired by this event, a highly representative selection of her subjects moved with an almost simultaneous impulse to the altar. Disraeli and his Mary Anne, Victoria and her Albert, even Lord Palmerston and his delicious Emily prepared for felicity that season. Wedding-bells were universal, and discreet Victorian *amorini* clustered in unseen jubilation above the happy couples. But the cloud of felicity hung nowhere lower or more richly charged than over Hawarden, where rumour positively announced a double wedding. At the Castle two maidens drooped and two young gentlemen paced the grounds together. The day broke at last, and one bridegroom—the more aquiline of the two—“rose in good time and read the Psalms.” The organ pealed; the Dean pronounced the blessing; bands thumped outside; the village children scattered flowers, and cottagers performed obeisances in all directions. For the tale of weddings was complete. The Queen betrothed, Lord Palmerston proposing marriage, Disraeli kneeling with Mrs. Wyndhan Lewis at St. George's, Hanover Square, were a mere prelude. Now Mr. Gladstone had received his bride; and the Victorian age was ready to begin.

## I

The joyful air had a less joyful overture. For courtship, in Mr. Gladstone's hands, became an almost thoughtful mode. The lovers met abroad. They had met before, but not as lovers—once at a dinner-party, where another guest was recalled (after a slightly suspicious interval) to have observed, “Mark that young man! He will one day be Prime Minister of England”; once in the echoing austerity of a Handel

From *Bonnet and Shawl: An Album*, by Philip Guedalla. Reprinted by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers.

For introductory note on Philip Guedalla, see his “The Stepfather of the United States” above.

Commemoration; and one vacation when he was staying with her brother. He was a young Member of Parliament—Oxford (as someone said) on the surface, but Liverpool below. A priestly appearance was appropriately distinguished by peculiar views upon the Church; and he had positively written a book about them, which lingered in the press whilst he refreshed his classical allusions with a Sicilian holiday. She was the sister of a college friend. They met in Sicily; they met again in the same hotel at Naples, saw sights together, dined a good deal *en famille*, and scaled Vesuvius; and when he left, he entered "this Circean City" in his journal. The allusion, it may be presumed, was rather to the classics than to any enchantress whom he had met there. For Circe was the last title which it would have occurred to Mr. Gladstone to bestow upon Miss Glynne.

They were all in Rome for Christmas; and his reflections took a less pagan turn, as he heard mass with Manning in St. Peter's or recorded endless Italian sermons in his insatiable diary. But one day he walked with her in Santa Maria Maggiore; and as they looked about them at so much Roman splendour, she was led to compare the meagre equipment of English churches with the ungrudging comfort of English homes. "Do you think," she asked the dark young man beside her, "we can be justified in indulging ourselves in all these luxuries?" She came, as he did, from a wealthy home. He was a Tory, too; and the answer was, perhaps, a trifle awkward. But the wide-eyed question charmed him; and he recorded it in his all-seeing diary among notes of sermons with the ecstatic comment: "I loved her for this question—how sweet a thing it is to reflect that her heart and will are entirely in the hands of God. May He in this, as in all things, be with her." For that winter day in Santa Maria Maggiore she had lit a candle that was to burn between them for sixty years.

His next move was less introspective. For the aspiration breathed in the privacy of his journal worked strongly on him; and Mr. Gladstone (even the skittish Muse of intimate biography attempts no more familiar address) offered marriage. He offered it with every scenic advantage that a romantic mood, combined with a classical education, could suggest. For he proposed by moonlight in the Colosseum. "The theme," as Disraeli wickedly remarked of someone else, "the poet, the speaker"—and [may one add?] the setting—"what a felicitous combination!" But Miss Glynne, sadly negligent of a historic opportunity, was unresponsive. One more classical allusion had fallen flat; and the Colosseum, still conscious of its unenviable place in Christian tradition, made one martyr more. The martyred wooer left for England. But by a laudable precaution he took with him the brother of his fair execu-

tioner; and the sister's letters breathed a suspicious interest in "Già" and "Già's" book on Church and State and her meetings with "Già's" great friend, Manning. She even employed this helpful medium to answer "Già's" letters to herself—"I appreciate very much the generous feelings which are expressed in his letter to me. . . . I cannot take Michael Angelo's beautiful sonnet to myself, but the sentiments contained in it are so lofty, it was impossible not to read it without the greatest delight. Please read this yourself to Già, as I particularly want the message to be given exactly." There was a watchful postscript: "Tell me how you get through my message to Già and any rebound. Nothing could express more honourable feelings and taste than the letter he wrote me." Meanwhile the lover was confiding to his journal a dejected sense of his undue precipitation, stupidity, and general unworthiness, or attending committee meetings with undiminished zeal. That year the National Schools Enquiry claimed him, to say nothing of the committees of the Additional Curates Fund, the Church Commercial School, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Church Building in the Metropolis, and the more secular affairs of the Carlton Club library and the Oxford and Cambridge Club. He even found time for a perusal of *Nicholas Nickleby*, which he found "very human; it is most happy in touches of natural pathos. No church in the book, and the motives are not those of religion."

But Mr. Gladstone, though suffering from no lack of church, was human, too; and his meetings with Miss Glynne were vigorously resumed in London. They met at every hour and in every part of town—at dinner-time in Berkeley Square, on horseback, even at breakfast with the poet Rogers. His journal still desponded. Even his father became the recipient of his despairs. But one afternoon they all drove down to Fulham for Lady Shelley's garden-party. There, Thames proving more auspicious than Tiber, his desire was granted. For as they walked apart, she yielded and "my Catherine gave me herself." The mood of her surrender left nothing to be desired. She breathed a lofty piety; and in return the happy lover offered, as a *gage d'amour*, four lines of Dante. They even called on the Archbishop, whose official embrace was gratefully recorded by a proud *fiancé*. Then they plunged into a happy whirl of family visits, further complicated by a second engagement in the family. For her sister, after becoming hesitations, had yielded to the entreaties of Lord Lyttelton. She was "much overcome, and hid her face in Catherine's bosom; then they fled away for a little," while Gladstone did his best to compose the agitated peer. So Hawarden was to have its double wedding. The couples drove about together, read aloud, or struggled with the endless complexities of sort-

ing out the sisters' property. There was so much to plan—their future lives, the fireworks, entertainments for the wedding guests, and eternity for one another, to say nothing of a pair of honeymoons and something for the village children.

The summer weeks flowed by, until the morning came when they were married in the mating world of 1839. The occasion, it must be confessed, was not lacking in emphasis. For the wedding carriages were followed to church by a notable procession recorded in the *Chester Chronicle*:

Band.

The Hawarden Castle Lodge of Odd Fellows.

Band.

Hawarden Temperance Societies.

Band.

Benefit Societies.

Band.

Tradespeople in large numbers.

The bridegrooms, deafened but happy, drove in the sixth carriage; and it is scarcely to be wondered at that Lyttelton, always a little apt to be upset, broke down again. Even Gladstone was unstrung. His unerring diary attributed it to the music: indeed, it was a wedding-march that might have shaken stronger nerves. So the happy couples were floated to felicity on floods of tears. For a slightly emotional piety seemed to prevail. Besides, in 1839 the age of sensibility was not so distant.

Even the honeymoon retained something of the dual character of that stupendous wedding. The smiling pairs were separated for a fortnight or so; and in an ecstasy of good intentions Gladstone, alone with Catherine, conversed on the fallibility of private judgments, on amusements, on the sanctity of time, on Sunday observance and the relation of charity to private expenditure. He prized his treasure highly; but in the very act he seemed to test her precious metal in the fires of improving conversation. At intervals he read the classics. But early the next month they were all back at Hawarden once again for "a beautiful meeting between the sisters" and the less spiritual delights of a servants' ball; and then the wedding tour started in earnest. This time two bridal carriages left for the coast; two pairs embarked for Greenock; and as they drove through Scotland, the obedient Highlands unfolded all their romance. Sometimes, indeed, they went half-way to meet it in full Highland costume, dressed somewhat unaccountably in Lennox tartan, each bride upon a Highland pony and each bridegroom striding attentively beside a pony's head. There was a happy interlude

behind the Scotch Baronial battlements of Mr. Gladstone's northern home, where everyone played a great deal of chess and the family circle was completed by the arrival of an unmarried brother-in-law. Then more excursions past Braemar and Ballater, still unconscious of the impending glories of Balmoral. But Lyttelton went south at last; and the Gladstones were alone for solitary chess and billiards—"C. and I in deadly conflict—too great an expenditure, perhaps, of thought and interest"—and endless leisure for reading Scott and Trench and Keble, to say nothing of the Bishop of London on Education and annotating Rothe's *Anfange der Christlichen Kirche*. A round of visits carried them to Christmas; and as the new year opened, they were moving into Carlton House Terrace. It was near the House of Commons, still nearer to the Carlton Club, and quite near enough to the Sunday school at Bedfordbury, where Mr. Gladstone taught. Rules were drawn up to guide the household, and the first bookcase was put up with due solemnity; the servants' library was chosen with immense deliberation; district-visiting began; and in the ordered virtue of her home Catherine prepared for sixty years with Mr. Gladstone.

## II

The sequel was not quite expected. It was easy to foresee a lifetime of devotion, with two figures steadily receding down the long avenue of public life, and two heads growing grey together. For she was bound to fulfil the lyrical prophecy of their best man at the wedding and to—

soothe in many a toil-worn hour  
The noble heart that thou hast won.

Be thou a balmy breeze to him,  
A fountain singing at his side;  
A star, whose light is never dim,  
A pillar, to uphold and guide.

(Such predictions are the natural penalty of inviting the Professor of Poetry to officiate as groomsman.) And the appointed rôle was nobly performed. Two generations of delighted Liberals watched the slim figure follow him down the cheering lanes of public meetings, steady him as he climbed on to innumerable platforms, tug off his coat, and sit demurely folding it as the big voice in front (with a suspicion of Liverpool about it) settled inimitably into the first deep "Mr. Chairman and fellow-electors." The House of Commons knew what hand had filled the "short, thick-set pomatum-pot, oval in shape, four inches in height," from which those eloquent lips drew intermittent (and

slightly mysterious) refreshment, when the cheers gave a convenient pause; and an eye raised to the Ladies' Gallery might catch a glimpse of an eager face that looked down at him, had watched unwaveringly, indeed, since distant evenings before the Corn Laws were repealed, when "I found myself nearly upon Lady John Russell's lap, with Lady Palmerston and other wives," and was still watching as he crouched, half a century away, beside the faithful Morley for a spring at the apostate Chamberlain. A Member once enquired why a small section of the brass grille in front shone so brightly, and was informed by the attendant that Mrs. Gladstone's hand had polished it. She pinned the tea-rose in his coat, contrived the endless complications of a migratory politician's life (a niece testified to "the manoeuvres behind his back, the extraordinary dodges to smooth his path or oil his wheels or cocker up his health"), and was occasionally suspected of offering a hand to be shaken under his cape by eager (but exhausting) Liberals. The Professor of Poetry had invited her to be her husband's fountain and (for the matter of that) his star. But far more often she performed the humbler, though more useful, functions of his screen. There was so much to screen him from—his own unresting energy, hosts of supporters, anxious colleagues, and the dreadful irregularities of a politician's diet. One day in the Midlothian election they paid a call just after lunch; tea was produced but, as he had a speech to make at three o'clock, respectfully declined; a cautious hand replaced it on the hob; the meeting opened, and the electors were informed of Lord Beaconsfield's iniquities at becoming length; the afternoon wore on, until the orator returned and the same hospitable hand offered the dubious refreshment of the same tea. Queen Eleanor, one feels, would have consumed the deadly brew and fallen at her husband's feet. But Mrs. Gladstone was more skilful. She let him take the cup, then sidled past and got it somehow underneath her mantle; a sudden admiration of the view drew her towards a window; and the Lowland landscape drank the Lowland tea. Small wonder that he adored her for a lifetime passed (as an artful hand has diagnosed it) in "feeding a god on beef-tea."

Not that her *rôle* was secondary. When she married, a cheerful friend offered congratulations on having someone at last to write her letters for her; and she made endless use of him—"Could you order some tooth-brushes and brushes *cheap* for the Orphanage?" "Have you remembered to peep in on the Miss D.'s? Only open the boudoir door and you will find them." "Did you manage the flowers (or grapes) for Mrs. Bagshawe? She lives quite near Portland Place." "If you have *time*, please bring down a little present for my three-year-old godchild;

there are beautiful Bible prints at the Sanctuary, Westminster, and also we want a common easel from the same place, 5s. to 8s. 6d., to hold the big maps for the boys." Schoolroom easels, Bible prints, tooth-brushes, flowers, and the socially desolate Miss D.'s were all to be fitted somehow into the hunted life of a Prime Minister along with Ireland, Egypt, and the Liberal Party, to say nothing of an uneasy Sovereign, Homer, and his own perpetual anxiety on points of Churchly discipline.

So Catherine was more—much more—than a lieutenant, a mere blank numbered oval in the group of supporters clustering behind him. A less distinctive wife, one feels, must have developed features of her own in the solitude of life with a public man, who habitually worked fourteen hours a day when in office. But even without this discipline Catherine was quite unmistakable. The two sisters of the famous double wedding had been known as "the Pussies"; and her engaging quality seems to survive in the affectionate persistence of the nickname. For, mated with the sterner figure of "Uncle William," she remained "Auntie Pussy" to devoted generations; and young people do not nickname great-aunts for nothing. Besides, she was a Glynne. The Glynnes were good; but under all their goodness there resided a redeeming streak of oddity. It expressed itself in a cheerful inconsequence, in an abiding taste for nicknames and portmanteau words and the etymological eccentricities of an elaborate family dialect. Catherine was an arch-Glynne, presiding imperturbably over vast Biblical migrations of innumerable Lyttelton and Gladstone children and their countless attendants, that ended in triumph on the devastated floors of Hawarden or Hagley, where a sardonic brother once recorded "those great confluences of families which occur among the Glynnes," with the agreeable turmoil of "seventeen children there under the age of twelve, and consequently all inkstands, books, furniture, and ornaments in intimate intermixture, and in every form of fracture and confusion." That was her *milieu*; and she revelled in it. Whilst Uncle William went his majestic way, she ran breathlessly behind in a splendid whirl of nephews, missed appointments, and wild domestic improvisations. A devoted niece admired "the astonishing intricacy of her arrangements, the dovetailing and never-ceasing attempts to fit in things which could and wouldn't fit." She told him once to his marmoreal face what a bore he would have been, if he had married somebody as tidy as himself. The contrast was complete—"the People's William," intent upon his stately progress, and his Catherine careering alongside with her gay assumption that "you were always ready to fall in with her and dovetail, and swap butlers, and supply meals, beds, cooks, or carriages at a moment's notice," and her endless trail of little notes, written on



scraps with broken pens and generously smudged, each "i" without its dot, each "t" uncrossed, and every period lacking its punctuation.

The very contrast made her more adorable than ever. With Mr. Gladstone sitting by, how could anyone resist the sweet inconsequence that once feelingly complained to a startled lunch-party at Windsor of the intolerable tedium of captivity for a notorious burglar—"But, oh, how dull he will be—conceive the utter dullness of a prison"? Hers was the bright, uncomprehending eye that looked up at someone asking if, when she said that a will had been "declared vull," she meant "null and void"; and hers the soothing explanation, "No, dear, I always say *vull*." That, surely, was the school at which Mr. Gladstone learned to sing plantation melodies or waltz swaying round the hearthrug to the disreputable catch, sung in duet:

A ragamuffin husband and a rantipoling wife,  
We'll fiddle it and scrape it through the ups and downs of life.

The song and dance are highly unlike him; but they were very like Catherine indeed. For, to their great advantage, she remained more Glynne than Gladstone.

Not that levity was, in any sense, her principal component. For the Glynnes were good; and goodness, for Catherine, meant something more than formal piety or regular attendance at public worship. That element, though, was never absent, as a startled modern may infer from the delicious entry in her diary—"Engaged a cook, after a long conversation on religious matters, chiefly between her and William." But her piety found its expression far beyond family prayers and the servants' hall. Sometimes, indeed, her benefactions had a fine inconsequence, with ailing school-teachers packed suddenly to Hawarden, wings hurriedly carved off at table and despatched post-haste to the village—"and let it go hot to Miss R. at once." But her good works could be no less systematic. The House of Charity in Soho and the Newport Market Refuge were her abiding passion, with Mrs. Gladstone for their indomitable almoner, committee-man, and maid of all work. She was perpetually dashing off from Downing Street into the East End or to her Convalescent Home at Woodford. Startled electors saw the Premier's wife alight from third-class carriages at inexplicable stations; and her days were a delirious round of workhouses and hospitals, punctuated by official parties and her endless vigil in the Ladies' Gallery. They missed her once from Hawarden after morning prayers: she was off after a typhoid case, had put her patient in the train, took her to Chester, left her installed in hospital, and was home in time for tea and an enormous charade of grandchildren. Small

wonder that when someone at the height of the cholera epidemic saw a lady busily engaged in bundling babies in blankets out of the London Hospital and asked who 'she might be, the reply was "Mrs. Gladstone." Some of the rescued infants even found their way to the august official attics of Downing Street. But she was still busy in the stricken wards, walking them quite as fearlessly as any Lady with a Lamp.

Hawarden itself was full of her—her Orphanage that had its birth in the Lancashire cotton famine, and the smaller home first opened for a knot of London cholera orphans. She even partnered her husband in the heroic embarrassments of his rescue work. A startled friend once asked him, "What will Mrs. Gladstone say if you take this woman home?" And the deep voice replied, "Why, it is to Mrs. Gladstone I am taking her." For when they reigned there, Downing Street saw strange encounters; and her urchins matched his Magdalenes. Each of the partners led the other on. She even led him into the composition of lyric verse upon minor items of intelligence from her Convalescent Home. He was a secret rhymers of considerable ardour and pursued with gusto the poetical problems presented by the style of Messrs. Parkins & Gotto and the no less unusually named bride of his last Home Secretary—

And by sea or by land, I will swear you may far go  
Before you can hit on a double for Margot.

But few Liberals believed their monumental leader capable of greeting with verse his wife's announcement of the happy news from Woodford that "the cook and the Captain are going to be married." He received the intelligence with one of his deepest silences; and she complained in wifely irony, "Oh, of course, you are too full of Homer and your old gods and goddesses to care—stupid of me!" But an abstracted hand had reached for a sheet of paper; the pen—the slightly portentous pen of *The State in Its Relation with the Church and Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*—moved rapidly across the page; and she was presented with a highly indecorous epithalamium, from its spirited opening,

The Cook and the Captain determined one day,  
When worthy Miss Simmons was out of the way,  
On splicing together a life and a life,  
The one as a husband the other as wife—

to its riotous conclusion,

Miss Simmons came home and she shouted, "O dear!  
What riot is this? What the d——l is here?"

If the Cook and the Captain will not be quiescent,  
What can I expect from each Convalescent?  
Fol de rol, fol de rol, fol de rol la.

He wrote it just to please her; and one may guess from the light-hearted scrap how much she helped to keep him human.

For, after all, he was the greatest (and, perhaps, the best) of her good works. There was his life to be arranged, his innumerable comings and goings to be contrived, the silence to be kept round his work, and all the blows to deaden which adversaries aim at politicians, though they mostly fall upon their wives. It was easy enough to stand smiling at his side and watch the cheering crowds—and then he could always think of such wonderful things to say to them, although she had to stop him once until the reporter could get near enough to hear. But the silent hours were not so easy, when he was sleeping badly, or the incorrigible Disraeli seemed to flourish like the green bay-tree, or his own friends began to fail him. That was when she stretched a shielding arm above him to take the blows; and he began to fear them more for her than for himself. For the unvarying alternation of success and failure had hardened him. His life had been like a deep excavation where defeat and recovery seemed to lie in geological layers, one above the other, over an almost geological period of time.

But one day the alternation ended, since recovery is more than doubtful for a resigning Premier of eighty-three; and as he faced the prospect, he became a coward for her. For when his last Cabinet had rounded with infinite solicitude upon the leader whom they were prepared to worship, but not to follow, he dared not take home the news. Morley must tell her; Morley was always serviceable; he should sham tired himself and pass the ball to Morley. So Morley dined at Downing Street; and after dinner, while the others played backgammon, she led the anguished Morley to a sofa, "behind an ornamental glass screen." Mr. G. had told her that he was fagged and that Morley would report how matters stood. And there on the sofa, while the two old gentlemen rattled their dice beyond the screen, he told her. She was quite unprepared, as the blow fell.

Not quite the last, though. She was alone for that, in the vast Abbey where she left him; and the watching crowds saw the hope living in her eyes, as "she went in like a widow, she came out like a bride." And in a year and a few weeks she joined him, dutiful as ever, with a murmur of "I must not be late for church." Indeed, she was not.

# Portrait of Our Father, Thomas Mann

ERIKA MANN (1905- ) AND KLAUS MANN (1906- )

Erika and Klaus Mann, daughter and son of the distinguished German novelist Thomas Mann, are, like their parents, political refugees. Like the four younger children of Thomas Mann, they have rapidly adapted themselves to American ways of life; from their home in Princeton, New Jersey, where their father has held a lectureship at the university, they have already contributed much to American journals and magazines. Erika is the wife of W. H. Auden, the English poet now also living in America, and is known as an actress, lecturer, and publicist. With her brother Klaus she has written *Escape to Life* (1939) and *The Other Germany* (1940), two books growing out of their experiences with Nazism. *School for Barbarians* (1938) and *The Lights Go Down* (1940) have their source in the same bitter opposition to dictatorship. Not long ago Miss Mann returned by Atlantic air-clipper to Europe to serve as correspondent for the newspapers New York *P.M.* and Toronto *Star* and the magazine *Liberty*.

Besides the books on which he has collaborated with his sister, Klaus Mann has written three novels: *The Fifth Child* (1927), *Alexander: A Novel of Utopia* (1930), and *Journey into Freedom* (1936). Like Miss Mann, he has lectured a good deal on the old and the new Germany and has written much on these themes and on democracy. At present he is editor of the newest of magazines, *Decision*.

Thomas Mann, subject of the following sketch, is one of the most important living men of letters. He had won a national reputation in Germany at twenty-five and has since become a world-figure. A winner of the Nobel Prize for literature at fifty-four (1929), he is best known in America for his novels *Buddenbrooks* (1901), *The Magic Mountain* (1924), *Joseph and His Brothers* (1934), *Joseph in Egypt* (1938), and *The Beloved Returns* (1940). Four years after he received the Nobel Prize he found himself in exile from the land of his birth, under circumstances described in the pages below. He was deprived of German citizenship by the Hitler regime, but he is honored wherever the freedom and democracy he upholds are still known and loved.

The sketch of Mann which follows is the sort of intimate portrait only Erika and Klaus Mann could write. It is at once the portrait of a man, of a great writer, and of a political exile symbolic of the inevitable enmity of true culture and the new barbarism. It is, of course, the peculiarly intimate approach to its subject which gives this portrait its unique value—as, for example, in the characterization skillfully conveyed in Part I by recollections of Mann's own account of his career.

WHEN DID OUR FATHER'S IMAGE first take on living form for us? Let us return for a moment to the land of our childhood, to the meadows and hills of the Bavarian uplands where we used to pass the summer months. They are far away from us now—a distance of a quarter of a century. Father, who looms very large in our childish eyes (he is actually of medium height and lightly built), is coming up the path that leads from the garden gate to the house. Our Tölz house, so called because it is in Bad Tölz, a health resort, stands in full sunshine against a gigantic black forest and looks out on to the Karwendel Mountains, covered with eternal snow. We are busy weeding the tennis court; it is very hot, and the sound of our parents' footsteps on the gravel path is good to hear, for it means dinner. Mother and father are wheeling their bicycles; they have been in the village shopping.

We seldom saw our father. In spite or because of that, we felt him as a great power in our lives, as the final authority from which there was no appeal. He worked every morning from nine till a quarter past twelve. In the afternoon he rested. Later, after tea, he wrote letters. During all these hours we had to be quiet, and there were terrible moments when he would come to the door of his study, demanding "Qui-et, there!" in a voice in which vexation struggled with the incapacity to believe that we had forgotten again.

Sometimes, towards evening, when we were sitting in the nursery on the chairs we had long since grown out of, and feeling very much bored with our box of bricks, he would call us. We would tumble downstairs as fast as we could; to be called in the evening meant being read to, and being read to by Father was the height of our dreams. For that purpose only were we allowed in his study—a moderate-sized room full of books, with a red plush carpet, a scrupulously tidy writing table, another round oak table covered with books, a chaise-longue covered with books, every chair stacked with books. The room was never quite free of cigar smoke, and the smell of it, mingled with a faint redolence of glue and dust from the books, was always associated in our minds with our father. Father would shut the door behind us. There was a book in his hand: a volume of the *Arabian Nights*, or Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, or Tolstoy's *Popular Tales*. He read beautifully; the figures came out of the stories and filled the room; the funny ones made us all laugh till we cried. We were thrilled, saddened, or shocked as the story would have us be.

We knew that Father wrote stories himself, though we were "too

young for them yet," but we knew too that he could have gone on the stage if he had wanted to. He was passionately fond of the theatre, and would often talk about what it would be like the first time he took us there. We used to think he could have been a musician; he played the violin beautifully, and when we sang carols on Christmas Eve he would whistle the alto most tunefully. But the fact of the matter was that he ought to have been an artist. Sometimes he would make little sketches for us—a gentleman with a goatee, who he declared, heaven knows why, was the Brazilian Ambassador, or another in tails who was "the Pride of the Ballroom."

Sometimes the children at school would ask us: "Does your father ever trouble his head about you?" It was our mother who took charge of our school reports, and when we had any "row" at home to tell about it was generally she who had intervened to settle things. It was obviously she who managed our education, and so we used to tell our friends: "No—I mean yes. You can't really describe it."

It is a fact that our father did not *seem* to trouble his head about us. He thought it was better to give us "a living example" than to make any attempt to bring us up in the way we should go. The atmosphere of our home, the feeling of spiritual responsibility, the discipline of work, the regularity of life, the cheerfulness, the calm, the gravity always tinged with irony which is peculiar to him, and which he brought to bear on our childish affairs with just the same kindliness as on the "grown-up" matters that touched him personally, his talks with our mother or with the friends who came to lunch—all these things, he thought, were of a nature to help in the formation of our characters. Besides, he relied on what he believed was our innate good sense.

On rare occasions he spoke to us of his own youth, his development, his life. The anecdotes from his childhood were by no means "moralizing," but in some way that is not easily explicable they had the power to enlighten us and to stimulate our ambition. Our father confessed that as a boy he had been very lazy—not thoroughly lazy, of course, for he had been an avid reader, had played the violin and written poetry, but lazy as a pupil. He received poor marks and was refractory toward his teachers. He told us many humorous tales about the teachers in his native town, Lübeck. And he also told us about the fine old patrician home in which he grew up—to this day it is shown to visitors as the Buddenbrook House, although the author who was born there has been living in exile, as a "traitor to his country." He told us about the room which he shared with his brother Heinrich for many years, of his grave, very correct father, of his beautiful mother, who hailed from Brazil.

"And then?" we inquired. "After you left Lübeck and were no longer a schoolboy, what happened?"

He sat in his armchair, his legs crossed, a cigar in his mouth, and said: "Yes, then the years in Munich followed—we left Lübeck soon after the death of my father, your grandfather. At that time I had already begun to write—or, to be more exact, I had never stopped. But the family was of the opinion that I should have a 'regular profession.' For a while I worked for an insurance company—but only for a short time. I knew that wasn't the right thing for me; I had other plans." Then he would smile mysteriously, almost gayly, as though the thought of those "other plans," then already shyly enshrined in his heart, amused him.

"Military service was definitely *not* the right thing for me," he continued. "My feet could not get used to the ideal German gait, commonly known as 'march past.' I became quite ill, was taken to the hospital, and had to be released from military service after a few weeks. I was more fortunate in another position, which I accepted about that time: I was made editor of *Simplicissimus*—you know that magazine with the funny pictures. The first money I ever earned was paid by this magazine. The publisher had accepted one of my short stories and remunerated me with three shining gold pieces—to this day I can feel them as they lay in my hand then. The man who presented these first gold pieces to me was Jakob Wassermann!"

"The real, dear old Jakob Wassermann?" we asked. "Have you known him that long?"

"Yes," he said, "I have known him that long. And we were always good friends."

Beautiful evening hours under the lamp, the air filled with heavy blue cigar smoke and talk—that was almost better than being read to. Our father spoke to us of Italy, where he had spent several years, together with our Uncle Heinrich. "It was there I began my work on *Buddenbrooks*. At first I wasn't at all serious about it. I thought to myself: why not tell a little about Lübeck? I have so many memories that will amuse my friends in Munich. And then the book increased in volume. I was terrified at such a growth, but I soon realized that was the only way—not one bit of it must be eliminated. That is the reason why I was so very much upset by the cruel suggestion of my publisher in Berlin, dear old S. Fischer, then quite a young man, to curtail the material to half its size, so that it could be published in one volume. I was quite unwilling to do this. While it was really meant only as a sort of jest for my friends, yet it was to be a very *exhaustive* jest. I wrote Fischer: 'I cannot permit deletions! I would rather abandon the publi-

cation!' I was taking a great risk; but I was fortunate—and Fischer listened to reason. The novel appeared in two volumes and gave pleasure not only to my Munich friends. Success came gradually—not with exaggerated speed, but steadily. And now the Buddenbrooks have become famous. . . ."

It sounded almost melancholy, just as though fame meant a kind of degradation. ("Fame is the sum total of all misunderstandings circulated about a person," Rainer Maria Rilke says in one of his works.)

"And then? And then?" We wanted to hear still more; it was so fine and exciting to learn of our father's life; to realize that he too had been young once, had played silly pranks; that he too had had to struggle for his first success. "And then?"

Now, however, he adopted the manner of the teller of tales. He took our mother's hand and caressed it a little, while slowly he said: "And then one day I was invited to a beautiful home in Munich. I went there often—as often as possible. And there were special reasons why I did. For the daughter of the house was so pretty and so clever and quite unusual in every respect—like a little princess." Possibly he would have told us more,—and we would have given anything just to be permitted to go on listening,—but our mother suddenly said, "Now it's high time to go to bed, children!"

The life of our mother is not at all like that of a princess, we know that—although we too think she almost looks like a real princess, with her heavy dark crown of hair, her wise, expressive eyes, and her many embroidered frocks that we call "the Bulgarian frocks" because they strike us as being vaguely Oriental. Princesses are genteel, but inactive, while our mother is activity personified. But, whether princess or not, we believe she's quite an exceptional person. Perhaps everybody thinks that of their mother; all the same, what she does is really exceptional. Six children in times like these! And she is not strong, either. After the war she was ill; she weighed less than a hundred pounds and had to be sent to a sanatorium. (A number of the graphic letters she wrote to our father from Davos he used in *The Magic Mountain*.) She is the best thing in life for all of us. And each of us is her "favorite in his own way"—that's one of her comforting jokes. She finds time to look after all of us and to be our father's secretary, impresario, and assistant at the same time. She writes his letters, types his manuscript, negotiates with his publishers, and it is to her that he reads aloud in the evening what he has written during the day. She is his courier and chauffeur too. We really believe it right to say that she is exceptional.

Although times were so bad, and we knew that our parents had many troubles, both personal and general, we had our family celebra-



tions, great and small, which were carried out with loving attention to every detail. Our father loved festivals; he used to look forward to Christmas almost as eagerly as we did. He would himself set up an old Christmas manger, arrange the pretty wax figures under the Christmas tree, give the dog, whom he had adorned with a bow of ribbon, his Christmas dinner, and wait with us in the dark study while the tree was being lit. He could be as thrilled by some little present—a refill pencil, a reading lamp—as we over our box of bricks or Punch and Judy.

In the summer of 1918, our Tölz house was exchanged for a slice of war loan, and life now went on, winter and summer, at our house in Munich. It was very hot. We four children, ranging from five to twelve, would lie in our bathing suits on the lawn in front of the house. Father would appear with the garden hose. His technique with the hose was particularly expert. It was not only that he could aim better than anyone else; he could also command the greatest possible variations in the play of the cooling jet of water. "It's the flick of the wrist that does it," he would cry. "It's an art!"

Indoors, the pleasantest room was the hall. That is where we held all our celebrations, and where we used to sit in the evening to listen to the music. The hall was paneled in brown wood, with bookcases reaching to the ceiling. It narrowed down to a bay with three big windows looking on to the garden. From the other end a folding door led into our father's study, with the beautiful, gilded, five-branched candelabra he was so much attached to because they came from his grandparents' home in Lübeck. There were some good pictures in the house, and prints in which our father took great pride.

The big gramophone was in the hall. Our father loved to organize concerts; one evening there would be German songs, another Tschai-kowsky or Wagner—very often it was Wagner. If a record squeaked or a woman's voice cracked on the top note, Father was as upset as a pianist who has come to grief over his showpiece.

As soon as we were old enough, we were allowed to be present when our father read his own work aloud in the evening. It was in this way that we got to know *The Magic Mountain*, *Felix Krull*, and the *Joseph* novels as they came into being. At first the audience on these occasions numbered three: Mother, Erika, and Klaus. Then the little ones, Golo and Monika, were allowed in, and finally the littlest ones came too.

For his part, our father has always enjoyed listening to others. "Parlor tricks," especially when they are amusing, give him the liveliest pleasure. He is in the highest degree "amusable," and this quality is a beautiful nuance in our father's portrait, like his childlike pleasure in pretty things, in "feasts," in attractively got-up meals and all the little

delights of life. He is a magnificent, grateful, attentive, and easily pleased "audience." His friends would read their work aloud to him, and us. Even we children, when we had something to produce, found the most kindly and sensitive critic in our father.

## II

In spite of the troubled times, life in our home for the ten years following the end of the World War was comparatively tranquil. Only after the first decisive election successes of the Nazis in September 1929 did politics have a disturbing influence on us. It was not long before our father realized and hated the monstrous thing he saw coming. His hope that it would suffice to give his fellow countrymen a living example (as he had chosen to give his children a living example rather than "bring them up") proved illusory. He felt that it was his duty to grapple with the evil directly, risking his whole physical and moral self in doing so.

After the September elections, he went from Munich to Berlin, where in a great, urgent speech he besought his audience to be on their guard. Nazi youths, scattered all over the hall, began to riot. They were hissed down by those who had come to listen to the voice of reason. Our father, small and still, stood above the noise; he went on speaking—said what he had got to say into the uproar and in spite of it. "He is no orator," we thought, sitting somewhat anxiously down in the body of the hall; "he is not meant to howl down yelling rowdies. Why didn't we prevent him? Why didn't we implore him to stay at home, at his writing table, where he belongs?" Yet we were proud of him all the same. And it is certain that Germany could have been saved from the worst even then, in the autumn of 1929, or still later, in the autumn and winter of 1933, if other men of mind, the prominent artists and intellectuals, had, like our father, brought their influence to bear on the situation, had made a stand to defend reason and morality against barbarism. They made no stand, and the enemy won practically without a fight.

On March 11, 1933, we put through a trunk call from Munich to Arosa, for our parents were having a few weeks' holiday there after a lecture tour. We told them that the weather at home was unpleasant, and that we would not advise them to come home the next day as they had planned. We could hardly make our father understand. "It's rough weather up here too," he said, to which we replied: "We're having the house spring-cleaned. You'd better stay where you are." It was a long, distressing conversation, but in the end our parents consented to wait and see how the weather and the spring-cleaning turned out.

When we ourselves arrived at Arosa the next day, we found our father calm and resolute. He had done what lay in his power to prevent what had now happened. As it had happened, and as, in Germany, his voice would be lost in the rattle of weapons and the clamor of those who had raised up the new leaders,—a clamor which drowned out every other sound, both the sweet voice of reason and the cries of suffering which issued from the concentration camps and prisons,—his place was no longer there, but outside, where his voice could be heard, and whence it might gradually penetrate into the misguided country.

That spring was an ordeal. In Germany they were beginning to resent the absence of the "Aryan" Nobel Prize winner, whose former delinquencies they would certainly have been ready to overlook. His passport had expired; at the consulates he was given to understand that it would be renewed without difficulty if the holder would take the trouble to have it done at Munich, the issuing office. But that is just what he would not do. Then came reprisals in Munich. First our car was taken from the garage, then our house and money were confiscated. But the news coming from Germany was so bitter, so ugly, that all personal hardship faded into the background. The weeks immediately following the "seizure of power" were the worst, because the unimaginable had to be grasped and the incredible gradually believed.

We had become homeless; we belonged nowhere. It was a matter of complete indifference whether our little hotel rooms were in Lugano or the South of France. Of course, we were now poor; and our mother must often have been more disturbed than she permitted us to see, because she didn't know how things could continue this way. Everything our father had achieved and earned—yes, even the honor bestowed upon him by the Swedish Academy, the Nobel Prize—had been taken from us. There must be a new beginning—in foreign countries and foreign languages.

We went down to the Côte d'Azur, spent a few weeks in Le Lavandou, a few more in Sanary. Father had stopped working; for the first time in our lives we found him, between nine and a quarter past twelve, out walking, or talking to our mother, with friends or alone, brooding over the disaster that had come. The world—our world—was out of joint. It had to be set right.

Erika was the only one who returned to Munich. Our father had left the manuscript of his *Joseph* novel at our home on the Isar, when he went to France and Switzerland for what he then thought was a few weeks' vacation. Now the house was confiscated and watched—but we would and could not leave the manuscript to the Nazis. Erika went to Munich. She donned dark glasses, so as to be unrecognizable, but as a

matter of fact they only made her more conspicuous. It was all very uncomfortable. And two moments will always be indelibly engraved on her memory—one when she opened the door with her trusty old house key, without attracting the attention of the Nazi guards; the other when she crept up the stairs, where so many scenes of our childhood had taken place, picked up the voluminous manuscript, and like a thief ran into her own room with her treasure. At that time, however, there wasn't the dreadful order at the border that would cost her her life were she to appear there today. The manuscript and Erika reached Sanary safe and sound.

The house above the sea in which we came temporarily to rest was small. But there was a study with a few books; there was a room in which we could sit together in the evening. Some big new chapters of *Joseph in Egypt* were written there, and when in the autumn we returned to Switzerland, to settle provisionally by the Lake of Zurich, we were already experienced exiles, who knew that life goes on whatever happens, and are at home wherever a writing table happens to be.

### III

One of the good things about exile is that it intensifies a man's contact with the world—indeed, that it creates a contact with the world which those who go for a tour abroad, and return home, hardly know. We had traveled about a good deal "before Hitler"; we imagined we knew our way about in Europe, and even in the United States. In reality, we had always been "on a visit"; we had never participated in the life of the countries we had stayed in. That has all changed now. And the friendship which unites our father to-day, say, with Switzerland, or Czechoslovakia, or America, is deeper and means more than any connections he could have established from home. In Germany he has been "deprived of his nationality," but he is a German writer, whether Hitler and his henchmen will admit it or not. He knows that where he is Germany is; but at the same time he is at home in the free world—in every place where there is sympathy for things of the mind, and where a man can work in peace and with self-respect.

Although he had been a frequent visitor to America, he made his first lecture tour "from coast to coast" in the winter of 1937-1938, and it was that tour which confirmed what he had till then only suspected—that here was the country in which life was fullest, most promising, finest. The most important democracy in the world received the exiles kindly. On the great tour which took our father into every corner of the continent, he met with so much understanding, so much interest and receptivity, so much enthusiasm for art and the spiritual things which

are above nationality, that, moved and grateful, he felt, "I should like to stay here." He therefore accepted an invitation to settle at Princeton, where he will give lectures at the university and continue work on his Goethe novel and the fourth part of *Joseph*.

The German university of Bonn has withdrawn the honorary doctorship it once conferred upon him; but it was unnecessary for him to relinquish the title of Doctor, since Harvard University honored him with the degree, and also Columbia and Yale. At Yale he had the pleasure of being present at a ceremony which took place at the opening of the Thomas Mann Archive. This fine and well-stocked collection of first editions, manuscripts, photographs, and appreciations of his work is a testimony of great and active love. While his books are being removed from the German libraries, while German school children are not allowed to learn his name, here in a foreign land, which has long ceased to be "foreign" to him, a home has been made ready for him.

Does this image of our father in America correspond to the one which rises from the depths of our childhood into the clouded present? Do we recognize it as the face that bent over us tiny children as we played in the garden of the Tölz house? We recognize in it the clear eyes under the dark brows, which rise high in surprise or indignation, the urbane kindness, and the gravity tinged with irony. The face has remained narrow, with the prominent nose we have all inherited, and the little, close-clipped moustache whose neatness and patrician conventionality are belied by the reflective and shimmering depth of the eyes. The voice which, as we sit together of an evening in Princeton, tells us the story of Lotte in Weimar is the same as issued from the corner of the Munich "study." We recognize the voice at once; we recognize the figure from which it issues as the one we once knew, though time has transformed it. For between and behind the slim silhouettes there rises, uniting, clarifying, and linking them, the work.

\* \* \* \* \*

## VI

This new humanism which is treated dialectically in *The Magic Mountain*, and is the grandiose finale of its intellectual symphony, could not but have political consequences. Its political implications make their first appearance in the *Speech on the German Republic* which Thomas Mann gave on a Goethe Memorial Day in Frankfurt-on-Main, and in which he made his first explicit avowal of democratic principles. The nationalist circles in Germany, who had imagined that the author of the *Reflections* would now be one of them for all time, were beside themselves with anger and disappointment. They howled "Treachery!"

and did not stop howling when Thomas Mann showed that he was going to remain faithful to the convictions at which he had arrived after a long and conscientious process.

His moral and political development, however, by no means came to an end with the *Speech on the German Republic*. It went on, and the pace at which it progressed was hastened by the fatal turn things took in Germany. The struggle against the barbarism which first menaced, then overwhelmed Germany was in very truth no "fight against windmills." Barbarism—the degradation of human beings by the "totalitarian state," the atavistic relapse into the pre-civilized stage of life, the life of the jungle, subject to the "law of might," where the notions of justice, freedom, and compassion provoke either scorn or helpless stupefaction—that is what Fascism is. But the new humanism, the new, age-old goal of a culture no longer based on social injustice—that is the idea under whose ægis Thomas and Heinrich Mann came together, and for the sake of which they both became irreconcilable enemies of Fascism.

This new humanism is comprehensive. It is faithful to the great values, the inalienable heritage of the past; hence it is also conservative. But it points boldly to the future, it has socialistic hopes; hence it is revolutionary. It is of its nature synthetic rather than antithetic, since it reconciles opposites by uniting them within itself, instead of playing them off against each other. It has both dignity and fire. It has room for all that is human, and is the sworn, inexorable enemy of the dogmatic inhumanity represented by Fascism.

The example which Thomas Mann follows with reverence in his new vision of man is above all the great figure of Goethe. The being of Goethe, the greatest of Germans and the greatest of Europeans, seems to him to show the most wonderful fusion of nature and culture, of national and supernational qualities. And yet in that huge mind of Goethe, who could endure "injustice rather than disorder," there is an element of rigidity, of aristocratic exclusiveness, of *fear* of changes that might occasion disorder—traits and tendencies that might well narrow the concept of a coming humanism and check its development. Thomas Mann knows that; he has always observed the great objects of his admiration—Nietzsche or Wagner, Frederick the Great or Tolstoy—with a curiosity tinged by criticism and skepticism. No one will venture to doubt that Goethe would have turned his back on the Third Reich with a still deeper disgust than on the patriotic clamor of the War of Liberation in 1813. Yet we have also reason to doubt whether he would have achieved more than the gesture of cold disdain, whether he would really have made up his mind to enter the struggle. It is a well-known

fact that the great man of Weimar never quite fell out with those in power.

But as soon as the Nazi danger became acute, that is what Thomas Mann resolved to do—to enter the struggle, and to enter it publicly. He could no longer be satisfied with serving the new form of humanity with his creative power alone, by conjuring up, in *Joseph and His Brothers*, primeval human figures, by bringing them close to us and “humanizing” early myths of humanity. His love of the future made him indignant at the horror of the present. As long as there was time he warned his fellow countrymen, in a host of articles and speeches; and when it was too late, when the disaster he had foreseen made it impossible for him to live in his native country, he fell into a brief silence of grief, and then found words again—eloquent words, glowing, angry, sorrowful, and yet not comfortless words, words that were confident for all their indignation and pain. They were heard not only by the outside world; they found an echo within the Reich itself. The famous letter *To the Rector of Bonn University*, that great answer to a petty action which consisted in withdrawing from the author of *Buddenbrooks* the honorary degree of Doctor once conferred upon him—that letter, which aroused attention in five continents, was greedily read in Germany. Read *with danger*, as may well be imagined. But thousands in the Third Reich really wanted to hear Thomas Mann’s voice and ideas again, instead of the everlasting “voice of their master,” long since become nauseous to them. And they risked prison and the concentration camp for the sake of that joy, that refreshing encouragement.

It cannot be assumed that those who dared to do so were moved merely by literary curiosity. They realized that they were not utterly degraded as long as that voice still spoke. The solace which that calm yet fiery pronouncement brought them came, on the one hand, from the memory of a better past; on the other hand, as a message of hope. The future of Germany, of Europe, of the world, cannot be so gloomy as long as a few proud and greatly gifted minds continue their active endeavors. That those few do not fail, but courageously carry on their difficult work, the work that so often creates new enemies for them—that is a guarantee.

A guarantee of what? Of the nearness of the Golden Age, of that lasting peace which would be a boon to all mankind? By no means. But a guarantee that the struggle is not quite hopeless, and that it has aims which make it worth while.

That is what those Germans thought who risked the concentration camp. That is what readers still living in five continents thought. And that is what we, his children, think.

# The Story of Elsa Strauss

SIR NORMAN ANGELL (1874- )

Sir Norman Angell is one of the most noted of living publicists, one of the most prolific of living authors. Born in England, he was educated at the Lycée de St. Omer, France, and at Geneva. He came to America as a young man, became an American citizen, and lived here until 1898. He tried ranching and prospecting in the West but drifted into newspaper work and returned to Europe as correspondent for various American newspapers. From 1899 to 1903 he edited *Galighani's Messenger*, then joined the staff of *Eclair* (Paris), became general manager of the *Paris Daily Mail*, and finally editor of *Foreign Affairs* (1928-31). A member of the Labour Party, he sat in the House of Commons as member for North Bradford from 1929 to 1931. He has continued to work for the aims of the labor movement in Great Britain. A crusader for peace and internationalism, he has served as co-president of the *Comité mondial contre la guerre et le fascisme* and in 1933 received the Nobel Peace Prize.

It is impossible to give here the very long list of the books he has published. Few living men have written so much and so influentially on current affairs. A few titles must suffice: *Foundations of International Polity* (1914), *The World's Highway* (1915), *Why Freedom Matters* (1916), *Fruits of Victory* (1921), *If Britain Is to Live* (1923), *The Story of Money* (1930), *Preface to Peace* (1935), *Peace with the Dictators?* (1938), and *We and the Refugee* (1939). His most notable book has of course been *The Great Illusion*, first published in 1910 and since that date one of the most widely read books of our time. It has appeared in England, America, France, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Russia, Japan, and China, and in the languages Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Marathi, and Tamil. *The Great Illusion* is a vigorous denial of the supposed relationship "of military power in nations to their economic and social advantage" and an assertion of the author's belief in a tendency in world-affairs towards the breaking down of obsolete nationalistic alignments. "The great illusion," in spite of the efforts of such men as Sir Norman Angell, has persisted into a new era of nationalistic conflicts and spoils-seeking. Recently the author has revised his best known work under the title *The Great Illusion—Now* (1940) to show that wars of conquest, in particular the one now raging, *must* be unprofitable to the aggressors in the end.

Sir Norman Angell is not, of course, a professional biographer. His style is that of a popular journalist; it is vivid, immediate, but sometimes slipshod. His "Story of Elsa Strauss" is a composite narrative



representing a phase in the tragedy of the European refugee fleeing the terrors of Fascism. There was no *one* "Elsa Strauss"; her name is Legion, and her story has been compiled from the records. The story is included here because its method of using a composite of biographical facts to tell a typical tale is an interesting departure in technique, with strong possibilities, and, most of all, because "Elsa Strauss" is one of the portents of our time, a typical victim of its resurgence of brute force and barbarism, whose fate concerns every civilized man and woman.

*The following can hardly be called a piece of fiction since every incident has actually occurred \* \* \* But, in order to make a continuous narrative, things which have happened to several people have, as it were, been collected together and assumed to have happened to one. The only liberty taken with actual events has been in some small measure to re-arrange the chronology in the sense that events spread over four or five years have been compressed into a shorter period, and the later conditions, in one or two cases, advanced a year or two. \* \* \**

IN A YEAR OR TWO NOW, if everything went well at the University, Elsa would get her degree, and would realise what had been her ambition ever since she had been a schoolgirl, too shy to talk about it. Fully qualified in medicine she would be able to carry on the work which had been her father's and had brought him renown throughout the civilised world. And more than renown—the deep gratitude of many hundreds of parents from whose spirits he had lifted so much pain: parents who had seen their subnormal or defective children transformed into healthy, intelligent boys and girls. His long years of work in that strange region of the ductless glands, coupled with his nutritional research, had enabled him (sometimes with the help of surgical intervention) to get results which no man in his field could approach. She wondered if any work in the world was more worth while than theirs—her father's and now hers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, it was that work that she would carry on. She did not suppose she would marry. That ass Willi had badgered her with his love-making . . . but no. Her domestic affections would probably be ab-

From *We and the Refugee*, by Sir Norman Angell, published by Penguin Books, Limited. Reprinted by permission of the author. Omissions necessitated by limitations of space total about one fourth of the original and are indicated by asterisks.

sorbed by little Karl, her dead brother's boy of six, of whom she had decided to take charge. \* \* \*

As she went into the restaurant where the students usually had lunch, she noticed that the members of her particular little gang, with whom she usually sat, were all talking excitedly. "More politics of that harum-scarum Willi," she reflected. "What is it now, I wonder. Last term it was money reform, some new kind of money that was to make us all rich and abolish all taxes, if only the bankers would permit it. He wanted them all shot. The term before that it was the Freemasons he wanted all put in jail. I wonder who it is now."

But, as she came up to the table, the talk suddenly stopped, and some of the students looked awkward and embarrassed.

"Oh, don't mind me, Willi," said Elsa. "I can never quite follow Willi's politics, but then politics are not my line of country. Who are the villains now, Willi? Last term you remember it was the bankers. Before that the Freemasons and before that the French. Who is it now?"

But Willi looked glum and angry and there was a general silence. In a moment the subject changed.

Elsa had to leave early for her lecture, while the others were having coffee, and, as she went through the door, she caught the sound of Willi's voice, and of the one word "*Juden*." But nothing registered in Elsa's mind. It was only afterwards that she remembered.

The next day no one was at the usual restaurant table, and that afternoon above the notice board in the entrance hall of the operating theatre someone had stuck a handbill which read: "Clear the Jews out of German hospitals," and underneath was a crooked cross which she now saw for the first time.

Then she remembered. She bore a Jewish name; her grandfather had been a Jew married to a non-Jewish Englishwoman. But she had never thought of herself as Jewish. Nor indeed had any of their friends thought of the family as Jewish. This handbill was doubtless the work of that windbag Willi, who was angry because she had made fun of his political fads—and perhaps because she had repelled his advances a little brutally. He had lately taken up with this strange fellow Hitler and his crazy gang. Well, next year Willi would be off on some other craze. It was not worth worrying about. Everyone knew that her family were German to the core; that her father was one of a dozen scientists who with Wassermann, Ehrlich, Einstein and such other Jews stood at the very top of Europe's scientific achievements and had

contributed, as no other dozen men had, to the greatness of German science and to the world's respect for it.

At supper that night, her father asked her about her day's work and she spoke of the incident. He was as little disturbed as she.

"Yes," he said, "I suppose I am half Jew since my father was a Jew; you are not even half Jew since your mother was not a Jewess. And I have never bothered about these political things—you know how absorbing our work is—it does not leave much room for anything else. But this 'race' business which the Hitler lot talk is, of course, the sorriest rubbish. It is a re-hash of the half baked science of that Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who cooked up the half baked notions of the Frenchman Count Gobineau. Its nonsense has been demonstrated by anthropologists again and again. There is no such thing as a 'pure' race. The Germans are not Nordic any more than the French are Gauls, or the English Anglo-Saxon. No. After all, we who live in Germany are an educated people and that stuff is not going to capture our nation. And then . . ." His glance rose for a moment to that place above the fireplace where they had put Karl's iron cross. "No," concluded Dr. Strauss, "you need not worry about Master Willi and his quaint politics."

But before the year was out both Elsa and her father had reason to be less confident.

Those politics they had so long ignored, began to intrude into their peaceful and laborious household. The impossible had happened. That fellow Hitler *had* come to power, and all the dunces from all the universities of Germany seemed to have joined the ranks of his followers and to be swaggering in Brown uniforms and flourishing whips.

The change came for them, as for so many others, like a transformation scene at the theatre. One day they were working and living in peace and security with masses of friends, doing their work, visiting, going out to dinner parties, not aware of any difference between them and other Germans, those whom they had known all their lives. And then, almost the next day it seemed, it had all changed. Friends of a lifetime knew them no more; houses they had gone into almost as freely as into their own no longer admitted them; dared not admit them. For The Terror had begun. Friendship with a Jew or half-Jew might mean denunciation to the Secret Police, loss of position, the concentration camp, heaven knows what.

She had witnessed things in the street which a year ago she would have denied could ever have happened in a German city: gangs of boys of fifteen and sixteen in broad daylight, carrying clubs and whips,

parading along the streets and stopping an old bearded man, knocking him down and then with their sticks beating him into insensibility while a gathering crowd of well-dressed men and women and children looked on with laughter and encouragement. When on that occasion a decent-minded, elderly taxi driver had attempted to intervene and offered to take the insensible old man home, passing S.S. men had forbidden him to do so, remarking that if the Jew dog had been beaten up he doubtless deserved it. Had this people among whom she had lived all her life gone completely mad?

Alas! She was to come to know that the madness could do worse than that.

Of course, it had not really come as suddenly as it seemed. Elsa had been almost unconscious of the storm that was brewing until she found herself in the midst of it, a victim. Just as a man about whose wife there is some scandal is the last to hear of it, so many of those under suspicion by the National Socialist Party in Germany were the last to know what offence they had been committing. It was not merely that of being a Jew, or even a part-Jew, or of knowing one. A report that you had been friendly with a Social Democrat or someone supposed to be a Communist; that you had Communist sympathies or ideas; or that you had made a disparaging remark about Goebbels, failed to salute a passing Nazi procession, or, most dangerous of all, offended some official of the party, was enough to expose you to denunciation.

\* \* \* \* \*

Even for some considerable time after the arrival of Hitler to power Elsa's life was not greatly affected. And then one day she received from a Jewish friend a summary—in newspaper cuttings—of the anti-Jewish decrees that had been announced.

They were to the effect that:

(1) All non-Aryan officials (this term embraces in addition to civil servants proper, teachers, university professors, judges, public prosecutors) are forthwith dismissed from the civil service. On the same day a law is issued debarring non-Aryan lawyers.

(2) Non-Aryan doctors are deprived of their panel practice (which in Germany is the backbone of most medical practices).

(3) A new decree has created a "*numerus clausus*" for Jews in secondary schools and universities.

(4) A decree expels dentists and dental surgeons from panel practice under the same condition as medical doctors.

(5) A decree by the Prussian Minister of the Interior applies the Aryan Clause of the Civil Service Law to municipal officials and employees.

Private health insurance companies have decided to exclude from their service all those non-Aryan doctors who have been excluded from panel practice.

(6) A new Civil Service Law stipulates that no one who is not Aryan, or is married to a non-Aryan can be appointed a civil servant in future. No exceptions of any kind are to be allowed.

The Labour Front (which replaces both the trade unions and the employers' organisations) has adopted the Aryan paragraph.

(7) The organisation of the film industry excludes all non-Aryans from employment in films in any capacity whatsoever.

(8) Jews are not to be admitted into the air-raid precautions organisation.

(9) A new Peasants' Law decrees that no one who cannot prove his and his wife's Aryan descent back to 1800 can become an hereditary farmer.

(10) A new Journalists' Law prevents non-Aryans from continuing to work as journalists, except on purely Jewish newspapers.

(11) The Aryan Clause of the Civil Service Law is extended to teachers in private schools.

(12) Hitler's deputy, Hess, has issued an order to all party members to avoid any contact whatever with Jews.

(13) The Minister of Education has published a list of books to be used in the schools for instruction in the Jewish question. These books include *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

(14) A decree by the Minister of the Interior provides that only Aryans may be admitted to the examinations of the medical faculty.

The Minister of the Interior has decreed that in future no licences for dispensing chemists shall be issued to non-Aryans.

A decree by the President of the Press Chamber provides that nobody who cannot prove his or his wife's Aryan ancestry back to 1800 may be in any way connected with publishing activities.

She began reading with more or less of indifference. All this could hardly touch *her*. By the time she had finished she had become pale and trembling. Did this mean that she, too, daughter of one of the greatest scientists of Germany, was not allowed to carry on her work—his work of mercy and salvation?

She was soon to know. A few days later the Rektor sent for her. He had been a friend of her father and was as kind as he could be. Did she know of these new regulations? They . . . it . . . The man was painfully embarrassed. Finally he blurted it out. She would not be allowed to take her degree, would not be allowed to practise medicine in Germany.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Elsa left him she moved in a sort of a mist of incomprehension. She could not even turn to her father just then because for a week

or two he had been absent at a big medical association meeting in New York.

So this was the end of her dreams of carrying on the great work of her father—that work which had brought hundreds of little children out of the darkness of feeble-mindedness and imbecility into the light of intelligent life—a work unequalled in its way. Why had she thus been forbidden to make her contribution to human knowledge? Why? Why? WHY? Because they supposed that in her veins ran a tiny drop of the race to which had belonged Jesus Christ, his Mother, his twelve Apostles; which had given to Christendom its Bible, indeed its every religious conception, to the West its moral law.

Exclude Jews from medicine! She had a moment of hysterical laughter. She recalled that a non-Jewish medical man a year or two before (while it was still relatively safe to refer even to the known truth) had pointed out that a Nazi who has venereal disease must not allow himself to be cured by salvarsan, because it is the discovery of the Jew Ehrlich. He must not even take steps to find out whether he has this ugly disease, because the Wassermann reaction which is used for the purpose is the discovery of a Jew. A Nazi who has heart disease must not use digitalin, the medical use of which was discovered by the Jew Ludwig Traube. If he has toothache he will not use cocaine, or he will be benefiting by the work of a Jew, Carl Koller. Typhoid must not be treated, or he will have to benefit by the discoveries of the Jews Vidal and Weil. If he has diabetes he must not use insulin, because its invention was made possible by the research work of the Jew Minkowsky. If he has a headache, he must shun pyramidon and antipyrin (Spiro and Eilege). Anti-Semites who have convulsions must put up with them, for it was a Jew, Oscar Liebreich, who thought of chloral hydrate. The same with psychic ailments: Freud is the father of psychoanalysis. Anti-Semitic doctors must jettison all discoveries and improvements by the Nobel Prizemen Bárány, Otto Warburg; the dermatologists Jadassohn, Bruno Bloch, Unna; the neurologists Mendel, Oppenheim, Kronecker, Benedikt; the lung specialist Fraenkel; the surgeon Israel; the anatomist Henle; and others.

Why! Gentile medicine owes almost as much to the Jews as does Gentile religion and moral law. Above all in this work for children had the Jews shone.

The lives of 5,000 babies are saved each year in England alone through the researches of Ehrlich; that those born deaf are now able to speak is partly due to the pioneering efforts of Pereire and Van Praagh; Nathan Straus, of New York, was responsible more than any other man for the general introduction of pasteurised milk; and Dr.

Barnardo, who was of Jewish descent, established the world's greatest orphanage.

\* \* \* \* \*

Three days later on her father's return from New York she talked it over with him. As always he was helpful and consoling, though, having for a month been reading the foreign press, he knew far more of events than did Elsa, and knew now its seriousness for them.

"I ought to have seen this thing coming," he said, "but then I have never thought of myself as a Jew or half-Jew, or as having any relationship to Jewry. All my life I have thought of myself as German; and, if anything besides German, as English, since my mother was English. Perhaps I was wrong. If I had stuck more closely to my father's people we might have somewhere now to turn. The fact that we have not belonged to their community and have in reality all our lives belonged to the German—the "Aryan" German—is not going to help us now. I can see now that in so far as the Jews do make a separate community, they have been so made by the very persecutions they have suffered. They have had to stand together for protection. Note our case. We have in fact been absorbed, assimilated; we were Germans. Look at little Karl, with his fair hair and pink and white complexion—a Nordic if ever there was such a thing as a Nordic, much more 'Nordic' than Hitler, who, from all accounts, is not Nordic at all. Karl, too, will be tainted, an outcast. Among Jews we may find refuge. Coming over on the boat I was reading of this effort in Palestine. It is amazing: the Jews once more returning to the land, the soil, and making the most civilised agricultural communities perhaps the world has ever seen. But only the solidarity of world Jewry in the face of this thing, the kind of thing going on around us now, has made the Palestine miracle possible. If we were Jews, if we had remained in that community we—or you and little Karl—might find refuge there. As it is . . .

"Why am I dreaming sad dreams like this?" he went on with a smile. "We need not yet take the road to Palestine. Our practice, after all, is largely with foreigners, English and American. What we must now do is to move to Vienna. You go there. We have relatives there and you can get your degree there and that gay old city can be our headquarters and finally our home. You shall go first with little Karl and I will follow later. I did not tell you, but I may as well tell you now, that the first news that I got on return home was that I must resign my hospital appointment—or I will be made to—and then perhaps I will be allowed the use of the laboratory there, perhaps not. So the move to Vienna is 'indicated.'"

The next day she set about the move, and learned what the regulations were, and what sort of thing happened to a non-Aryan trying to get a passport.<sup>1</sup>

First of all, the non-Aryan who wished to leave the country would have to get a certificate of good conduct from the police authorities.

At the police stations, the hours for granting these certificates were erratic and usually very short. Applicants were lined up outside the station in two queues—non-Jews in one, and Jews in the other.

As the Jewish population is not more than five per cent of that of the whole country (in fact it is only one per cent), only one Jew was admitted for every twenty non-Jews. This meant that the Jewish queue was kept waiting many times as long as its "Aryan" counterpart.

Similar methods were being adopted all over Germany for the transaction of most official business. Sometimes the Jews spent three or four nights in queue-waiting before they could obtain some certificate or official form.

It was no unusual thing to see old men, and raggedly-clothed, badly-shod women and children, shivering in rain or sleet as they waited endlessly outside a Government establishment.

At night the waiting Jews were fair game for rough handling.

When the certificate of good conduct had been obtained, the Jew who wished to leave the country had to apply for another certificate as proof that all his taxes had been paid.

This required a further queuing up of three or four days; and to obtain the tax certificate the authorities had to be given full details of property, cash, or holdings held by the applicant.

(Not only did the taxes for the current year have to be paid, but those for the following year as well. This second figure is sometimes fixed with fantastic ingenuity to hinder the taxpayer.)

Even if the Jew was lucky enough to satisfy all the preliminaries he was still not granted a passport unless he could produce proof that he had a visa to go abroad—(and many foreign Governments will not grant a visa unless a passport is produced first!).

The granting of the visa might take anything from a few weeks to many months. The certificate that all taxes had been paid remained valid for only four weeks, so that the Jew whose visa did not arrive in time might have to go through the whole performance of waiting and paying again.

Some of these difficulties might be overcome by bribery. Nazi officials,

<sup>1</sup> These particulars were given in an article published in the *London Star* of November 22nd, 1938. Some of the conditions were not in force when Elsa was trying to get her passport.



it became known, were usually well disposed towards monetary persuasion, but, like the demands of their leaders, the sums needed to bribe them were likely to mount ever higher and higher. If they were offered 100 marks and they knew that the man who made the offer had 1,000 marks, they would want the 1,000. And if the 1,000 were not forthcoming, they would make an arrest on a charge of offering a bribe of 100 marks. Bribery was a desperately dangerous business.

Such were the prospects. Nevertheless, Elsa started out. She got on fairly well at first and reached the stage of waiting in the passport office. It was unlucky that her name prompted the idea that she might be "non-Aryan," and the particulars which she was obliged to furnish, revealing her as a non-Aryan student of medicine and the daughter of a non-Aryan scientist, seemed particularly to excite the hostility of the uniformed young louts swaggering with automatics on their hips.

She was not long in discovering that the very things which had been her pride—her father's scientific eminence, her own unusual academic record—were the very things that made the pimply-faced boy in Brown uniform, who demanded to see her papers, angriest. With a start she recognised him: a student she had known, sent down for sheer stupidity, and worse, "a really dirty swine," as another boy had described him. She began to understand: she, the non-Aryan, could get honours, could beat the "pure" Nordic. No wonder he, with other similar Nordics, clamoured for the non-Aryans to be excluded from the universities. She began to understand why one Brownshirt Leader had said: "When you hear the word culture, loosen the safety catch of your automatic."

When the pimply-faced youth pushed her into the little dark room at the back, she began to hear stories. She heard an old bent woman whisper, "Yes, he was taken away." "Taken away?" How "taken away?" And she began to hear names for the first time, "Dachau". . .

\* \* \* \* \*

She continued to go to the passport office. She sat there one whole day; and another; and another.

The fourth day she heard one of the men talking. "If I could afford another two or three thousand marks, none of this waiting would be necessary. Get a Nazi lawyer in favour in the party and give him a fat 'honorarium' to 'take your case in hand' and you can get a passport in twenty-four hours."

Elsa jumped. She and her father in the old days had known many lawyers; some must be *bien vu* in the party. She thought. Why, of course. There was Dr. Schmidt. They had known him rather well.

The next day she went to see him. Having known him pretty well, she was not particularly secretive. She explained she had decided to move to Vienna and take little Karl with her. Her father might follow later. She understood there was considerable formality about a passport.

Could he undertake her case for her? She understood also that the fees involved were considerable, but would an honorarium of say three thousand marks cover the cost?

He took particulars—endlessly it seemed to Elsa; about her grandparents, her mother's relatives in England; her father, her father's patients and friends in England, his friends in Germany.

"Let me see," he said reflectively, "I think Guttman, the bacteriologist, was associated with your father in some of his work?"

"Oh, yes. They worked together for years."

"Have you seen him lately?"

"No. . . . Wait. . . . Yes. I did find him closeted with father when I got home late the other night."

The lawyer sat a moment in silence.

"I think we can fix your matter all right. But you had better go immediately to my friend Schultz, who specialises in this sort of work and keeps abreast of all the new regulations—they are altered pretty frequently, you know. I will telephone him now and find out whether he can see you."

Whereupon he went into another room. He returned in about five minutes and said:

"That's all right. Schultz will see you now. He may have to keep you waiting. But make a point of seeing him, because he will be leaving town after to-morrow and he's the one man who can help us most."

She took a taxi and sent in her name. The girl typist came back in a few minutes and said that Herr Schultz would be busy for a little time, but please would she forgive him for keeping her waiting. He might be half an hour or a little more. He was so sorry.

Elsa waited. Half an hour, then another half-hour, and then another. It must, she thought, be near the closing time of the office. And then the typist came and said Herr Schultz would see her. She went in. A youngish man; duelling marks, coarsish. Yes, he informed her, there would be no great difficulty. What papers had she already? She produced them. Could she leave them with him? Thank you. "If you will call the day after to-morrow, I may have your passport for you."

Elsa walked home elated. The step which a month or two ago had seemed to her tragic, this giving up of Germany and in some sense starting her career all over again, had now somehow become itself an escape, a new hope. Of course she could start again. As to the degree,

she could do it on her head in Vienna. Fortunately, they had a little money saved. There were those English investments which the father of one of the children in the clinic had recommended and which had turned out so well. And her father would be happy in Vienna. And little Karl could go to school *there* in peace without being tortured every day. Oh! the world was beginning to be a good place again.

She ran upstairs to their flat on the third floor, humming a tune, and let herself in. She must tell her father all about it. She went into his study and found it empty. The room was in chaos. Books pulled from the shelves, papers scattered all over the place . . . drawers pulled out. And where was her father? He was always in at this hour. "Martha!"

"Martha!" she shouted for their old servant. No reply. "Karl!" She began to wonder why Karl had not come running to greet her as he usually did. She went to his room. It was empty. A dreadful feeling of something eerie came over her. She thought she heard a sob and listened. Yes, there it was again. It seemed to come from her own room. She ran to it, and there lying on the floor was a little bundle shaken by quiet sobs. She ran to him, and carried him to the bed. And then turned on the light. The child lay still for a moment, and as the light revealed his face there was on it something, some look, she had never seen there before. She got a sponge and towel and wiped his face. The child had not said a word. She held him for a moment in her arms. With a gasp he clung to her, and then suddenly there came from him a flood of tears and sobs, uncontrolled, uncontrollable.

Not from Elsa. She knew now that she was facing things far worse than those which this child's father had had to face upon the battlefield. And for the sake of this injured child she was going to face them.

She let the child cry. She held him in her arms. Then came some stammering words jerked out between sobs: "Oh. They hit him. . . . They hit him with whips. . . . They kicked him. He was all over blood when they took him away."

"Whom did they take away, darling?" Though she knew. She knew. "Grandpapa."

\* \* \* \* \*

She had to take stock, diagnose the situation, as a doctor would. She must make no more false steps—for she felt dimly already that some act of hers this last day or two had accounted for the descent of the Brown Shirts. Her father had been taken to a concentration camp. He had been "beaten up"—but she knew that that was a commonplace of these arrests. He was probably still living. Why had they taken him? He had

never mixed in politics even in the remotest fashion. And he was a famous scientist. A year or two ago that would have constituted a great protection. But her experience of late had taught her two things. First, that the average Nazi was often unbelievably ignorant of the real glories of Germany in this world of science; and many of them believed it to be patriotic and heroic to defy the opinion of civilisation. If the Party could compel an Einstein to emigrate, cause a Thomas Mann or a Feuchtwanger to flee for their lives, her father's world reputation would be likely to prove a very feeble shield where Nazis were concerned. No, if it suited their purpose they would kill him if he was not already dead—"shot while trying to escape."

But for what purpose, why?

Why now? Why this afternoon while she was away? Why . . . ?

Then she began to put things together. Why had she been kept waiting in that lawyer's office for two hours? *Who* was the lawyer? Both of those she had gone to were eminent in the Nazi Party. And she had gone to them to get a passport to leave the country; had told them that her father would leave too; and had offered a big fee. She began to guess things.

From what occurred afterwards to herself, Elsa was made to know what had happened, though some of the details she was only able to piece together months afterwards. Not her father, but one of his scientific friends, Professor Guttmann, had been "denounced" as a friend of Communists, an exporter of capital. G. was in hiding somewhere and his home had been searched; letters from Abrams had been discovered. In these letters Abrams had mentioned that he had funds abroad and had suggested to G. that any English or American royalties due on the English translations of G.'s books should be allowed to remain abroad.

The lawyer to whom Elsa had gone about her passport was in reality an official of the Gestapo. The very fact that a non-Aryan's daughter should want a passport for Austria, and that she had said outright her father was to follow, suggested to a zealous Nazi flight from Nazi justice, and almost certainly flight of savings from Germany, which the regime were trying to stop. He had, therefore, determined upon an immediate investigation in the home, preferably when the old man was alone, so that there could be no "collusion" with the daughter.

Elsa wondered afterwards that she had not grasped what was taking place when she had been sent to the "lawyer who specialised on obtaining passports," and he had kept her waiting two hours. Later she was to learn that the Brown Shirts had been instructed to "act quickly and stand no nonsense," instructions which had made them, as one of them

explained afterwards, "a bit rougher than they might have been with the old man."

\* \* \* \* \*

But most of this Elsa could only guess at during that silent evening at the flat, with the child in his drugged sleep, the tragic disorder of her father's room. What next? She grasped enough of it all to realise that somewhere she had made a false step. She must make no more, or the boy and her father and herself, upon whom they now depended, would all be lost. To whom now was she to turn for guidance?

Her instinct was to telephone some old friend of her father's or some grateful patient. But the moment she thought of it, she rejected the idea. That indeed would be another false step; for after the events of the afternoon it was certain that telephone messages would now be tapped; and to talk with a friend of her father would be to put that friend, too, in mortal danger. Even if she went out and called on anyone she would probably be followed. And could she leave little Karl all alone in the house? Suppose another visitation of the Brown Shirts? She shivered, despite her resolutions of hardness and "doctor's impassibility." She sat there with a sense of paralysis, fearing that anything she might do would be another false step.

How, first of all, could she find where they had taken her father? What was happening to him? Was he alive? Suppose she boldly called up the police themselves? Or went to see them? She would not in any case be able to escape their questionings at any moment that they subjected her, too, to the third degree. But then she recalled a proclamation of Goering's just after some minor purge. And it ran thus:

If the relatives or friends of any person against whom the Party has been obliged to take action enquire as to the whereabouts or fate of that person, he will immediately be subjected to a more severe treatment.

It was a Satanically clever device for ensuring that there should be no "fuss" on the part of the families or friends of any person whom the party decided to "take away."

She buried her face helplessly in the child's bed. Was she thus to pass the whole night being pushed from one tragic impotence, helplessness, into another?

Suddenly the bell rang. She went to the door expecting police. But it was neither the police nor the Brown Shirts. It was Kurt Lieberg come to see her father.

Now Kurt Lieberg was one of Elsa's fellow students of medicine. He had professed at one time to be very much in love with her. Perhaps he

had been. But she . . . well, marriage had always been rather out of her calculations, and Kurt's politics, a good deal to the Left, had puzzled her, rather bored her. He was so *very* intense on things which seemed to Elsa secondary. But what a relief to see him now.

She felt she had now to take a chance. She *must* trust somebody just now. She told him the story. He listened without much surprise, but deeply moved. For Julius Strauss had been his supreme hero of science. When she had finished her story Kurt said:

"I came here to-night, in fact, to warn your father. I am not going to tell you how I know anything of his affairs, but I do. It is very much my business now to know that sort of thing. But what you most need to know now is this: Your father has been arrested for two reasons mainly. The Gestapo thought that through him they could trace Guttman who has got away, and they believe that your father has funds abroad which they can seize as the price of letting him, and you, and little Karl go. They will hold the three of you as hostages for the money they are determined to get. If your father was not killed this afternoon by the Brown Shirts, he will not be killed in the concentration camp. They will probably let you see him in the hope that you will persuade him to surrender his English and American funds."

"But, of course, he must. They are only small amounts, and if they let him go to Vienna, he would easily build up a practice."

"If they are only small amounts then the outcome is doubtful, for they believe the amounts to be large. And you will need money for bribery."

They talked far into the night, but as yet things were too uncertain for definite plans.

The month that followed was a purgatory that tried Elsa's reason. She dared make no move to discover whether her father lived or not; she feared to approach his friends lest she expose them to danger too. Fortunately she had funds in order to carry on.

Then in about a month she was summoned to the office of a Gestapo official. He was curt:

"Your father has been placed under preventive arrest for two grave offences. He has been helping an offender to escape from justice and has declined to give information of the whereabouts of the fugitive. And further, your father has been exporting capital. The law requires that this should be surrendered. If he decides to do this and satisfy justice, his passport to Austria for him, yourself and his grandson will be granted. You will see your father this afternoon, and in your common interest you would do well to persuade him to reveal the whole of his holdings abroad."

Elsa said:

"His foreign investments, which are merely fees paid by foreign clients, allowed to remain abroad, are very small in amount and I am sure he will surrender them for the sake of the passport."

"Well," said the Gestapo official, "we shall see. So far he has been recalcitrant. If the foreign investments are not surrendered there will be no passport."

The official made a sign, and a Brown Shirt marched beside her as they went downstairs to a waiting police car outside—a closed car so that she saw nothing of where they were taking her.

After a very short while—it could not have been more than half-an-hour—they stopped, the door was opened and she was hustled up some steps. But she saw that this was no concentration camp, and recognised it immediately as some suburban hospital of a third-rate order. She was marched down a corridor, into a ward, and in a corner bed lay the figure of her father.

One glance told her that never again would—could—that once splendid and fine intelligence be devoted, as it had been for fifty fruitful years, to the service of his fellows. As a doctor Elsa saw what he had been through. The face was hardly recognisable, save for a gleam in the one remaining eye—the other had evidently been horribly smashed. Yet somehow he smiled and somehow signed for her to come near. The nurse and Brown Shirt stood by the bed and he spoke so softly, and in English, that even she, kneeling by him, had difficulty in hearing. So she knew that they could not follow.

"There is not much time, my beloved. I am finished. But don't grieve. After all, I have had—how do the English boys who come to us put it—a good innings. There is work I would like to have finished. But you must finish it. You have intelligence, courage and patience, and you will need them all. They want to take from me my savings in England. If it really meant that we could all go to Vienna, I would, of course, give up those few pence. But they battered me rather badly that afternoon you were away getting our passports, and if I could get to Vienna I fear I should be no use. You and I know these things. One eye gone, perhaps now the other will go; skull fracture; double jaw fracture. No, I should be no use. Then if we did give up these sums, should we get the passports? It is not certain. I have thought it all out.

"Now have courage in hearing what I shall tell you. The doctor here has been as good as he dared to be. After all, one is not Julius Strauss for nothing. He has given me certain things and I have kept them. You will report to the officials here that my mind wandered to-day and you could get nothing clear from me. The doctor will arrange that you come

again to-day week. But you will not come. You will be in Austria. The doctor here tells me that it can be arranged. You recall a student who was once in love with you? And whose first name begins with a K? Nod your head so, that I may be sure you follow. Go to him. Each night outside the medical library. A week is enough. You may hear that I have asked for you. It will not be true. To-day week I shall be peacefully asleep—asleep you understand, perhaps dreaming of my little Elsa. . . .”

“No . . . No . . . No,” came from Elsa between sobs.

“Yes. You and I have seen death. We know that it is not terrible in that way. It is part of the strategy of life. Now you must promise me. It is impossible now to change plans. You remember the name of the English solicitor?”

Elsa nodded.

“Now promise me: You will not try to bribe the Nazis with that money—for they would not keep *their* promise.”

Elsa's face now was stone. How could she thus help to plan her father's suicide. She knew of these things, of course. Dozens every day took that road. A merciful road, she had heard some say—“better than Dachau.” But her father—and to consent to it in this way. Could not God have spared her this?

And her father kept on with a sort of moan—for while thus planning his own suicide with his own beloved daughter, he had to create the impression with the watching Brown Shirt that his mind was wandering—“Promise! Promise! Promise!”

He stopped. And then in a still lower voice and still in English:

“Beloved. . . . You make it harder. All else is harder. I want to save my work. That may be eternal. Not this body. You can save my work. Only you. If *you* escape. . . . Viennese diploma. . . . Greatest in world. . . . After you Karl. . . . Promise. . . . Promise. . . .”

Again that dreadful, pretended-insane chant began.

“I promise,” said Elsa, though she knew the words were a death sentence, a death sentence upon the being she most loved in all the world.

They remained silent for a moment. Then he said:

“In a minute, I shall pretend to faint; you must tell the nurse, who will call the doctor.”

His head fell back and Elsa said to the nurse:

“He has fainted—can you call the doctor?”

When he came, the doctor looked at him a moment and felt his pulse and said to Elsa:

“Was he coherent as he talked? Did he ramble?”



Elsa said: "He was coherent just for a little and then he kept losing the thread and towards the end he rambled terribly; I could not keep his mind to anything."

"I feared it," said the doctor. "The interview was too much for him. I will make a report and you shall see him next week."

Elsa, standing by the bed, took the hand of the figure that lay there, so still, so silent, so motionless. After a moment there was just the gentlest pressure in her own hand. She bent and kissed the cheek. Her lips rested upon it a moment. She rose, dropped the hand, made her body turn so that she could not see the figure lying there, motioned to the armed man at the foot of the bed and walked with him down the long ward.

She never saw her father again. And a week later there passed, by his own hand, from all knowledge of men, one of the great minds of modern science; one of that host of gifted men and women who pass in some such way every week, every month; victims of a barbarism that flaunts its love of cruelty, its hatred and contempt for the priceless and irreplaceable treasures of the human spirit.

Elsa was to discover that the German world of learning and science, which had so suddenly from one day to another found itself the victim of terror, subject to physical torture, or blackmail, was beginning to build up a system of defence. Since so great a part of the world of science, learning, art, literature was either "non-Aryan" or Liberal, alike banned and proscribed, it was from first to last a very considerable world in which there began spontaneously a sort of Mutual Protection Association. There was nothing very secret about it. Most of the really intelligent students who had studied under men like Strauss would, even when members of the Nazi Party, refuse to betray directly and of malice aforethought their old masters or their old colleagues. The brutalities for the most part came from the stupid, the dunces, the louts, the unbalanced fanatics. She never knew whether Kurt Lieberg belonged to a "secret" organisation or not. But he seemed to have no great difficulty in arranging that two nights later she and Karl should be picked up at the doors of the medical library by a "motoring party" of Bright Young Things who forty-eight hours later, having left the car, were clambering in the dusk, under the guidance of a peasant, down a mountain torrent; resting at times for an hour together under rocks, then moving rapidly for half an hour, then resting for several hours—and at dawn having breakfast at an Austrian inn.

Elsa's name and parenthood was a passport to most of scientific Vienna. But she was soon to discover that it was a passport nowhere

else. In other words she had now no papers; no means of identification; she and Karl had become virtually "stateless" persons.

The lawyer who had asked for her papers during that fatal two hours when she had been kept in his office by promises of visas for Austria had secured all her papers for the express purpose, of course, of preventing her flight until the matter with her father should have been settled. Though she had managed to outwit the Gestapo in the effort to prevent her flight, she had done so at the cost of this kind of statelessness. It did not worry her at first, because friends of her father in Vienna were extremely kind to her and she had funds for the moment; and little Karl, as ever, captured hearts in every house they stayed at.

But when she communicated with the English solicitor about the investments of her father, the thing took on more serious aspects. Dr. Strauss had made a will in Elsa's favour—a document which, with a few other precious papers of her father, she had been able to bring with her. And Kurt, with whom she had left the key to the Strauss apartment, had managed to send her a few more, and a few precious books and mementoes—but that was all. The furniture, the pictures, the precious testimonials, the heirlooms that the doctor had accumulated, had all been seized by the police immediately upon the death of her father. But the solicitor in England explained that before the property, amounting in all to about three thousand pounds, could be transferred to Elsa they must have proof of her father's death, and proof of her, Elsa's, own identity.

She trusted, however, that it would all be straightened out in time, and tried once more to take up the thread of her work. It was very, very difficult. First there was the absence of her father. It was like learning to live with one arm after an amputation. And she had to go over old ground in order to get her Austrian degree; to arrange about Karl's schooling; to find some employment that would eke out the small remaining sums she had managed to take out of Germany and to get some of her father's patients in England to help in the final settlement of the difficulties about her legacy. But she stuck at it steadily. She felt that only by carrying on her father's work could she somehow forget that afternoon in the suburban hospital, justify to herself her acquiescence—or her failure to fight more insistently—the dreadful—and noble—plan her father had adopted.

And at every turn she was hampered by the absence of papers. She came to realise that a piece of paper with a stamp on it may be the difference between life and death, and that hundreds of people have blown their brains out because they could not get it. It led her to take

a somewhat different view of politics. Heretofore she had always regarded work, such as medical research, as the only real pursuit of knowledge, and had looked upon "politics" as the field of windbag adventurers. So, in fact, she saw that it was, for the most part. But she was beginning to feel now "somebody ought to do something about it"—ought to try to discover why men behaved as they did in the region of politics, for she now saw around her demagogues and windbags creating in a month more misery than medical science had been able to cure or prevent in weary years of labour; she saw the work of the scientist rendered useless by the mischief of the politician.

Particularly did she feel this when the shadow of the Swastika suddenly began to fall upon Austria. The best informed believed it to be touch and go as to whether the evil reality might not shortly follow. One Austrian in high authority whom she met at a friend's house, learning whose daughter she was, said to her very sadly but very seriously: "My child, you will realise that I cannot enlarge upon it, but I must give you counsel in two words: Flee Austria."

"Flee Austria!" easily said. But how? How? And where? Where?

She was paralysed by the absence of papers. Britain. . . . Switzerland . . . America. She had tried all the consulates. In her search for a paper which would restore to her her lost identity, she even thought at times of going to one of the "passport factories" which other refugees in Vienna had told her existed.

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And while she was in the midst of her efforts, but still no nearer obtaining the ardently-desired papers, the blow fell. Hitler had entered Vienna. Jews were being attacked in the streets. Every family had a brother or cousin in a concentration camp. Any day one might be "taken away." The old Vienna, whose liberties had gradually been declining, had now disappeared completely. Stark fear dogged one just as it had in Germany. Elsa knew now that, with or without papers, she must get away.

But again, where? And again Elsa's thoughts turned to England—but without papers there could be no question of it.

A friend of Elsa's, Liselotte Blum, who was planning to escape over the mountains to Switzerland, urged Elsa to accompany her. But could little Karl stand it? Nights in the mountains, long and dangerous climbs. Elsa feared for him the hardships and danger of such an attempt. She heard how men, and sometimes women and children, had been facing the ice and snow which still blocked the passes of the frontier between the Vorarlberg or the Austrian Tyrol and Switzer-

land; how between the peaks of the Silvretta range of Alps, some of them more than two miles high, men, women and children had attempted to hack their way to freedom. Some had escaped the horrors of the-avalanche and crevasse only to be neatly picked off by Nazi rifle-men. No, she would not expose Karl to that. They should not get him.

Elsa was able occasionally to see the English newspapers in the flat of an English friend where she spent many hours. Her feeling of desperation increased as she read:

Desperate Jews continue to flock to the British passport control offices in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany in the hope of gaining admission to Great Britain, Palestine, or one of the Crown Colonies. A visit to the passport control office here this morning showed that families were often represented only by their women-folk, many of whom were in tears, while the men of the family were waiting in a concentration camp until some evidence of likelihood of emigration could be shown to the Secret Police. In a few cases it was possible at best to give only an undertaking that a visa for Palestine might be issued to the applicants in certain circumstances. \* \* \*

Most of those who applied for a visa of some kind which would let them out of Germany were doomed to failure. To the majority, even though they carried letters from friends or relatives in England, no visas could be given, particularly since the great number appeared to be "stateless" through the loss of their German citizenship. . . .

Elsa knew that apart from the legal methods of getting out of the country there were, of course, illegal ways of escape.

Members of the Secret Police or S.S. troops could be bribed to smuggle emigrants over a border, without visa or passport. Some frontiers she found were more expensive than others, and in large German and Austrian towns there was a sort of illegal stock exchange, where the prices for human smuggling over the various borders rises and falls according to the vigilance of the frontier guards of the countries concerned.

This method, however, was becoming increasingly difficult because of the closer watch which was being kept on the frontiers. Jews were being turned back from the French, German, Swiss and Czech frontiers, and their fate was usually a concentration camp.

In almost all frontier regions there were large bands of men, women and children camped in the narrow strip of "No Man's Land" between the borders of Germany and her neighbours.

They spent their time wandering to and from the borders of the countries that surround Germany, trying surreptitiously to get across. Usually they were caught and sent back. They dared not return to Ger-

many because they knew the fate that awaited them there, so they waited in "No Man's Land," eagerly watching for another opportunity to escape.

Sometimes the Nazis themselves forced the Jews to take these illegal methods of escape.

In Eastern Austria, especially, one heard how police and troops forced Jews to crawl across the borders; or dumped them on islands in the middle of the Danube.

One party of Jews boarded some disused Danube barges and floated down towards the Black Sea. A few were picked up at Galatz, the last Rumanian town on the estuary of the river. No one knew what happened to the rest.

Once more she turned desperately to England and America. Could any of her father's patients, or rather their parents, who had been so grateful for what he had done for *their* children, do something now for *his* child and grandchild? In intention and even in effort they were kindness itself, but they, too, seemed to become entangled in the barbed wire barricade of paper—passports, permits, visas, guarantees, undertakings—as though the admission of a young woman asking nothing but the right to devote her life to the salvage of human wrecks, and having already in her degree given evidence of her competence in the work, in some way carried a pestilence against which countries had to protect themselves.

Would someone offer an absolute guarantee for her maintenance during the whole time that she might remain in England? Well, that already was a good deal to ask of people whom she hardly knew. Would she undertake to accept no employment at all during the time that she was studying? Well, that depended upon whether she could recover her father's property or not. Would she undertake not to practise when she had completed her studies? And then there was Karl. Would she find someone to guarantee him too?

She read in the English press of those who were trying to help these wanderers. \* \* \* Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, for instance, writes to the Manchester *Guardian*<sup>1</sup>:

A young Jewish lady, a university graduate of Vienna, was compelled to flee from that city when Austria was annexed. She took refuge in Rome, where foreign Jews were not then persecuted, because Italy was the only place to which, for a long time, it had been possible to remove German money, and naturally she was obliged to take with her means of subsistence. She has now been ordered by the Italian authorities to leave Italy, but no country is willing to receive her.

<sup>1</sup> November 22nd, 1938.

As she is known to me, I offered her shelter and pledged myself to the Home Office to maintain her so long as might be necessary. The Home Office has refused to allow me to receive her on the ground that arrangements for her future are not definite, and that Italy and Germany would probably refuse to have her back. I repeat I pledged myself to maintain her as long as necessary.

Evidently even when there was a guarantee by a distinguished and well-known lady, that would not suffice.

\* \* \* \* \*

And she knew that there were literally hundreds of such cases. Evidently she could count upon no quick refuge in Britain, however great the goodwill of individual English.

But where else was she to go? Switzerland was now closed to the "stateless persons with no papers"—which she and little Karl had now become. The best chance at the moment, her friends assured her, was in Czechoslovakia. Her father's name would probably secure her entrance into what was then still a Liberal and tolerant state, standing like an island in the turbulent waters of Nazidom. People told her that it would so remain.

"France and Britain," they said, "cannot afford to let the last refuge of democracy in central Europe collapse. It will be the end of *their* democracy, too, if they do." So argued the persecuted in those days.

So she made that move, making use of money, that opener of gates. In Prague she would start all over again, trying to reshape a future, a future in which she and Karl should not become through thought and by habit mere dependents, or beggars, or hunted fugitives.

She managed to get across the Czechoslovak border—old friends of her father in Prague had gone to the Czechoslovak Government and managed to get the formalities on that side waived. But on the Austrian side it had meant heavy bribery, and now funds were dreadfully low. In Prague she and Karl shared one tiny room. She trained herself to manage on a hunk or two of brown bread and a piece of cheese and an apple a day in order that Karl might get his milk and properly balanced food. Fortunately he made friends easily and spent a lot of time with people in Prague who had known her father. That helped. She gave a few lessons in English; helped in a pharmacy.

\* \* \* \* \*

August came. Lord Runciman was in Prague. The shadow of war. It passed. And great rejoicings. A Great Peace. English papers told those in Czechoslovakia how lucky they were. And then—the swastika

was at the very door. The S.S. man was giving orders here in free Czechoslovakia—the President himself was an exile. Berlin was giving orders: German fugitives must be returned to Germany, and Prague, trembling, dared not refuse.

Into Prague itself came a great flood from Sudetenland fleeing from the "Liberation." They became a problem for the new Government so pathetically anxious not to offend Berlin. These Germans from Sudetenland might become a new problem, a new "German minority" which would furnish further justification for Nazi "rescues." The Prague Government was doing its best to push them back. Ex-German nationals must certainly go back, said the new President, with his eye on Hitler. "Back" meant the Concentration Camp, prison, beatings, deliberate, prolonged and planned torture; death for the lucky ones.

Again consulates were stormed; again thousands waited and again a few lucky dozens, at most hundreds, got their precious bit of life-saving paper. But even that now did not suffice. For Poland would not transport the refugees, and the way out through Poland was now the only avenue left. Czechoslovakia was trapped; caught between pincers.

Elsa had to take a hard grip upon herself. Her money now was gone. Her friends—those who had known and been the friends of her father—were kind, but also terribly frightened. To help a German refugee was now very dangerous. Lists were being kept, agents of the Nazis, the secret police, were watching and to-morrow the Nazi would be complete master in Prague too.

Even if the friends of her father took little Karl in their homes—which, they explained, they would love to do—it would come out that he was the grandson of an offender against the Nazi regime and they would somehow seize him as a hostage—it was happening all the time. No, they dared not.

They reminded her how even Schuschnigg's son—the little eleven year old Kurt—was held prisoner in Austria as a pledge of his father's "discretion."

\* \* \* \* \*

Elsa knew now indeed that to be pushed back into Austria, now become Germany, where the Nazi police were even more ruthless than in old Germany (they were set upon paying back old scores)—to be pushed into Austria meant the end. Yet she could not even get to Switzerland without going through Austria, and all other frontiers—Polish, Rumanian, Hungarian—were tightly closed; the doors of escape were being bolted everywhere—even if she could have reached the frontier with Karl in this wintry weather, with snow upon the ground

and Karl's wardrobe now so dreadfully scanty. The air was the only way of escape—by 'plane. But it cost a fortune, and seats in the only 'plane—a weekly one—that did not stop in Germany, were booked weeks and weeks ahead. Even if she spent her last few coins on a last despairing telegram to English friends, what could even they do now? It might take weeks to induce the Polish Government to allow through to the coast the refugee trains they were now refusing, and meantime, at any moment, the Prague Government might push her back over the frontier. That sort of thing was happening. It was happening on all the frontiers of Nazidom. She knew, as the whole world did, that thousands of men, women and children in one "drive" had been herded at the point of the bayonet into cattle trucks and taken to the Polish frontier at Zbonszyn, dumped into open fields and driven at night in the dark through ditches and hedges across the line into Poland—and the next day driven back—with the children crying, the old people dying. Now under bits of sacking, in abandoned cow sheds and stables they herded and huddled together waiting—for what?

\* \* \* \* \*

She found Karl sitting with his coat on in the cold room which they could not afford to heat, busy cutting out pictures from the newspapers and pasting them together to make strange animals. It was a game she had thought out for him to keep him busy while she was away, now that he could not stay with the friends that were afraid to have him. She managed to smile at the results of Karl's efforts and sat down on the floor beside him to see what animals *she* could make. There was a knock at the door. When she opened it, there stood the landlord. She braced herself to explain that she had not yet the rent but . . . His visit had not that object, however. The police had been there and interviewed him about the nationality of his tenants. He understood that they would be returning to-morrow. He was curt and evidently not telling her the whole story. Had *he*, tired of waiting for his money, notified the police that a German was occupying the room?

What should she do now? If in truth the Czech Government, goaded by Berlin, were in fact rounding up Germans and pushing them across the frontier, then she must run—if there was anywhere in this wide world to run. Where could she run? And how, without money, without food?

There was not much sleep for her that night, but, mercifully, Karl slept.

In the morning the summons came; quite early. A Czech policeman,



obviously loathing his job, said he had orders for her to be put aboard a train leaving at noon for Ludenburg.

"Ludenburg!" she cried paling. "Ludenburg—but that's now in Nazi hands. It's death for both of us. It would be kinder to push us both out of the window here, and end it."

"Sorry, lady; those are the orders."

The conversation had taken place on the landing so that Karl might not hear. The policeman could give her an hour to get her things together. And she must then come with him. A lorry would call. He would wait below.

With her heart like ice she put on a smile for Karl. "We are going for a trip, Karl. It will be great fun."

Hastily she stuffed things into suit-cases; and in the midst of it turned to the window. Six floors. Would not that be best for both?

But at that moment she turned and saw Karl—standing with a business-like and important air between two suit-cases trying to decide where his book of pictures should go.

Not yet, she decided, not yet.

They were bundled into the lorry—a score or so of people. Two elderly women and three children amongst them. At the railway station they were turned into a waiting-room with about two hundred others. And they waited and waited.

At the end of a couple of hours, two men with cameras slung over their shoulders entered the room and began asking questions. They came near her and she heard their German. It was not of the best, and when one turned to speak to the other he spoke in English. They are not likely to be Gestapo, thought Elsa. She addressed one of them in English:

"Can you tell me where they are taking us?"

The man looked surprised: "Your English is very good," he said; "what are you doing in this crowd?"

Karl fortunately was talking to other children some distance away, so she said:

"I fear I am being sent back to Germany, which will mean imprisonment for me, and as for my little nephew . . ." and she pointed to him and made a gesture with her hands.

"You say Germany, but this train only goes to Ludenburg, and stops before it gets to the new frontier. They don't want all this crowd in Ludenburg; most will be turned back at the frontier. We are newspapermen and we have the latest news about it all."

Elsa looked up into the face of the journalist. It was a decent face with kindly eyes. She said:

"You see that child. No dearer or more charming child ever walked this earth. Can you save him from—I think you know what?"

The man looked at Karl, and was silent a moment. Then he spoke:

"I will get the child to England where he'll have a chance. Children can be got through pretty easily—some hundreds are being let through every month. But perhaps we can save you too. I don't know. Anyway the child. But I'm rather in a hole. We both have to accompany this train, and we are on a rather difficult and perhaps dangerous job. We are writing up the whole story of frontier evasion by refugees, and are meeting to-morrow morning a refugee relief organiser from Brno. Stick close to us and we will see what we can do."

Just how they managed it she hardly knew. But after dark that night the train stopped; she and Karl were roughly pushed out and she found herself helping Karl through a ploughed field with the journalists just in front. Here they remained perhaps half the night. Karl slept most of the time; fortunately it was warm for the time of year.

A colleague of the two men with Elsa—another journalist—had described for his paper the kind of thing that happens in just the kind of situation in which Elsa and Karl found themselves. In his account of something that occurred at just about that spot this other journalist writes:<sup>1</sup>

Fog descended on the field. A cock crowed in the distance. It grew chilly. I could not see far. Mist and the hazy struggle of night and dawn blurred the vision. An hour, or maybe an hour and a half, passed away.

Then, suddenly, the shape of a man loomed before us. We called out to him. He wanted to turn and run once more.

"*Helfer, nicht Polizei*" ("Helpers, not police"), my companion hissed in German.

"Thank God," came back the answer. The man staggered towards us and threw himself on the ground.

"At last, at last," he sobbed. We gave him some brandy. Then he told us who he was.

"Dr. Ernst R." The stiff, conventional form of social introduction seemed somewhat out of place in these surroundings.

"The third night. The third night," he shot out the words abruptly. "From Vienna. Could not—could not get through. I signed I would never come back to Germany. They made me sign it. And they took my passport. That's against the law. I know—I was a lawyer."

<sup>1</sup> The incident which follows is reported by Mr. H. P. Smolka in the [London] *News Chronicle* of September 5th, 1938.

He laughed hysterically. "A man of the law, I was. Now I am an outcast. A nobody. Without a passport, you do not exist. *Quod non est in actis non est in mundo*. How can I live? I am not confirmed on paper. No rubber stamp? No photograph? Ridiculous. What is this bundle of flesh and blood and bones? A man? Can't be a man. Has no paper to prove it's a man. Out with it! They said they'd shoot me if I came back. Sent a farmer to take me across into Czechoslovakia . . ."

He stopped suddenly. "We are in Czechoslovakia now, aren't we? Will they hunt me back again, back again into that, over there, behind the forest? Stop them! They must not send me back. I won't go—I'll kill myself. I tell you I won't go back. Let them shoot me right here. Three nights, three nights, I've been going to and fro. No food. Days in gaol on either side or on the road gang over there, nights trying to run the gauntlet of Czech frontier guards.

"'Out with you, Jew,' they laughed over there. Made me jump into the river, swim across. Here, gendarmes on the shore pointed their rifles at me: 'Back with you.' Back I went. Told them over there. They laughed. 'Sure no one will take you. We won't take you back. Who are you? An Austrian? Can you prove it? We took your passport, you say? Say that again, you swine. We never saw you before, go back again, try, try. Or shoot yourself, if you're not a coward.'

"They offered me a gun. I refused. A record tourist, that's what I am. I've visited Czechoslovakia eight times in three nights, or perhaps even more often. The fields do not look any different here after you're across the border. A tennis ball, that's what I am. A human tennis ball. The border guards are the players, their rifles are the rackets, the frontier the net. Oh, what a lovely game!"

We kept silent, asked no questions, did not stop him. We knew he would calm down. Then he smiled—an embarrassed curling of the lips.

"I am sorry, gentlemen. I am ashamed I let myself go. You must understand. Circumstances. It will pass. If you could take me to Brno somehow, I'm sure I'll get over it in a few days. I have a brother there. He is a wealthy man. Surely he will arrange matters with the authorities. Two personal witnesses confirming the identity of a person without documents suffice to obtain a temporary registration," he quoted a paragraph of law. "At least that was what I learnt at the University twenty years ago."

We offered to take him to Brno in our car. The driver was waiting for us behind the last house of the village.

"Oh, gentlemen—how could I forget? Forgive me, gentlemen. There are seventeen others in the forest, people like me, even worse off some of them. Old people, a sick woman, three small children. Can we take them too?"

We could not. The sun would rise in a quarter of an hour. The frontier patrol might be back any minute. There were no extra seats in the car.

"Don't reproach yourself," my companion said to Dr. R. "That is just fate. You are over the worst. Let's hope they'll strike some other chance."

We drove to Znoimo, a small place between the border and Brno, and

stopped outside the Synagogue. My companion knocked at the door. From the number of knocks and the varying intervals between them I gathered that it was a pre-arranged signal. An old man opened the door, squinting through a narrow gap between it and the wall. Then he let us in.

An oil lamp poured out a sickly light over the hall of the prayer-house. Eight people lay on the benches. An old woman and two young girls, a boy of tender age, three youths and a middle-aged man. Thermos flasks stood on a rough table in a corner, and empty coffee cups.

"To-night's crop. All since midnight," the old sexton said. "Hope a car comes to take them to town before the police are after them. Last night the cops raided even this temple. Got to hear that some of the refugees call here first after they get across. Found five people. A family with three children. Poor wretches. They cried and begged, 'Let us go. Please let us go.' I prayed in a corner.

"When I turned round the old gendarme wiped his moustache. He would not let me see his tears. Then said he could not help it and took them to gaol. They were taken back to the frontier to-night and told to run across."

My companion nodded, and promised to speed up the car for "to-night's crop" if it had not already left. We drove on. It was 6 a.m. when we reached Brno. The office of the local Branch of the "League for the Rights of Man" which is in charge of all refugee work there was already crammed full of people.

But despite all the relief organisation could do, Dr. R. was arrested the next day, "repatriated" the following night.

No one has heard of him since.

With Elsa and Karl things went somewhat differently.

Somewhere towards dawn there was a movement of feet in the distance, the flash of a lamp and there stood three tall Czech guards and two policemen, and the whole party were taken to the police post near at hand.

There they waited until someone in authority should see them. While they waited, Elsa and the journalist were able to devise a plan. The journalist knew that if Elsa and Karl were not released, they would be "pushed" across the frontier. But there would certainly be chances of evasion, explained the journalist. Even the guards would help a child like Karl to escape, and if she could make her way into the woods she would find other refugees who would somehow give her shelter. He would remain in Brno, get a car and pick her up at the edge of the woods just opposite the haystack where they had been hiding—the haystack was quite close to the road.

They had time to elaborate it all; the journalist gave Elsa money, sandwiches, chocolate for Karl, and a flask of brandy.

The journalists, of course, had their papers, and when the officer in

charge appeared were promptly discharged. Elsa was told that she, with the child, would be put across the frontier, she with others. They could stand no more nonsense and orders from Prague were explicit. Yes, the officer knew it was hard for the child, and for the girl. But they must go with the rest. There were several children in the party that would be sent over the border that afternoon. Exceptions could not be made, or there would be no end to it.

She and Karl were given a meal, and that afternoon they joined a party of some twenty people: men, women and children. Four armed guards with fixed bayonets accompanied them. Several of these people were "going over" for the third or fourth time—had been pushed across and had managed to get back.

She and Karl dropped in the rear of the party and said to the guard, a big, nice-looking boy:

"What would happen if I were to run with the child into those woods over there?"

"If only I saw you, nothing. But if the corporal saw you, he might order us to shoot. We would miss, of course—at least we would try to miss. But there have been accidents. You see we must shoot or we should have a court martial. And the captain at headquarters is getting angry that Brno is still full of refugees that we are supposed to have pushed across."

The group halted for a minute while some child was attended to. The river lay in the distance and there, she had heard one of the guards say, they were to be ferried across in the dusk. A hundred yards off the road were a group of trees. Very quietly she and Karl slipped off the road and made for the shelter of a hedge where they could hide.

"Stop!" the word rang out like a shot. She caught Karl by the hand and ran. She heard feet behind her. Others of the refugees were running too, six or seven. Shots rang out. Karl fell. She stopped and picked him up. A tiny trickle of blood ran from just above the eye. He was quite dead.

Elsa stood and waited for the guards to come. They were quite a long time. When the corporal came up, he was angry—angry that she had made him shoot. When he saw the boy and the blood running from his head, he turned pale and said: "That was an accident."

Elsa said, very quietly: "I am a doctor. The river is just over there. I would like to wash his wound. May I do so?"

Hesitant, the corporal signed to a guard. "Take her to the river. See she does not get away."

She took the child in her arms and, regaining the road, walked with him by the side of the guard.

The guard said: "If you run into those woods, I will fire and miss you. I am a good shot. I shall miss."

Elsa said: "I want some water first."

They were near the river. Elsa saw a landing stage. She walked to the edge and quickly, before the guard could do anything, clasping little Karl tightly to her bosom, jumped in.

The eddies of the current carried two dead bodies to the other shore. Germany had recovered both Elsa and Karl.

# Charles Townsend Copeland

## "Copey" of Harvard

ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT (1881- )

One of the liveliest of the minor figures in contemporary biographical writing, Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant was educated at Bryn Mawr and, abroad, at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France. Her Parisian education intensified interests in French culture and civilization which have persisted through later years. Upon her return to America, however, she devoted herself to social work and investigation, another of her absorbing interests, in both Boston and New York. *Toilers of the Tenements* (1910), her first book, was the fruit of her social investigations. *French Perspectives* (1916) was a series of skillful studies of French literature and social life. In 1918 she published a translation of a striking narrative of World-War experiences by Jean Girardoux, the French novelist, *Campaigns and Intervals*. For years a regular contributor to the *New Republic*, Elizabeth Sergeant served as French correspondent for the magazine in 1917 and 1918. On the battlefield of Mont-Bligny, which was not yet "cleaned up" after the action there, she was accidentally wounded by the explosion of a hand-grenade and spent a prolonged term in a war-time hospital. *Shadow-Shapes: The Journal of a Wounded Woman* (1920), made up of "images and memories of war-time Paris," was written in her hospital bed. Her short "profiles" and biographical sketches contributed to the *New Republic*, *Harper's*, the *Nation*, and other magazines were collected in 1927 in *Fire under the Andes*. These portraits of contemporary Americans prominent in literature, the theatre, college teaching, and the law are among the most appealing of their kind. "Fire under the Andes," at the core of the world, symbolizes the flame of genius and inspiration animating the men and women she paints.

Her "Charles Townsend Copeland" is a sketch of a famous Harvard teacher who has never conformed to conventional academic stereotypes. Like all the sketches in *Fire under the Andes*, this is brief, impressionistic, vivid. The method is that of a summary of a career, interspersed with graphic glimpses of "Copey" speaking and acting. There are implied comments by the author, as well, on what good teaching is.

CHARLES TOWNSEND COPELAND is one of the few legends that Harvard University has produced. A thin, caustic, discreet little man, with a

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large head, a meagre if carefully erect body, and rather pinched and greying New England features, he does not look at first sight a legendary figure. You might pass him in the Yard in an east wind, steering an armful of shabby books, and think you had noted a "professor." But "Copey" does not mean "professor" to Harvard graduates and undergraduates. His appointment last year [1926] to the Boylston chair of Rhetoric was not a tribute to academic achievement in the usual sense. It was the tardy recognition of a unique influence.

The influence has centred in Hollis 15, whose square-paned windows, high among the branches of the elms in the north end of the Yard, have been a night beacon to many solitary or sociable young souls, and many sentimental *revenants* from the larger world beyond the gates. In this mellow academic domicile, a relic of the Harvard of the eighteenth century, at the head of three naked and worn flights of steep stairs, the Copeland who receives his guests begins to manifest his spell, and define his characteristics.

He comes obviously from the state of Maine, for one thing—any good New Englander will recognize the winter apple flavour, the accent, clear and crisp, the species: one of those "old" families who esteem themselves highly—highly and acutely. I should expect a man from coastal Maine to pick out such a room as this, for crabbed tenantry and courteous hospitality of thirty-odd years. The three flights of stairs give a kind of advantage of height as well as a kind of seclusion. The early American flavour is reminiscent. There is safe comfort within—firelight, candlelight, oil lamps, panelling, and walls of books, yet the windows are fit for scanning distant seas. The host announces that his great-grandmother Townsend read Pope's *Odyssey* to her daughters and servitors as they made the Thanksgiving pies. A proud, sturdy race, appreciative, as it has had to strive for them, of the good and honorific things of this world.

The room is comfortably populated and full of quiet talk. Responsive young men, much at home and at ease, fill the background. The honoured lady—"I can make one Queen o' the May—I don't know how to administer two or three, having the fate of Paris in mind"—sits on the left of the glowing hearth. On the right, the host—a conscious celebrity, you would say, maintaining with whimsical crusty speech an attitude. A "character" who likes to usurp our pleased attention. A slightly pompous Johnsonian character, with Lamb-like quips, and Carlylesque locutions, declaring, when pressed, literary judgments discerning, direct, kindly, and modern beyond the mannerisms. And all the while, the man behind the "character," the man himself, leaning back in the morris chair, with the single gas-light beside it shining on



the forehead rising to his bald head, a trim, oldish figure, in a grey suit, with stiff Puritan back and air of perfect correctness, requires and expects a deeper definition. The grey face, with its eager eyes and vivid sudden smile, is almost poignantly sensitive and sharp with some inner light of feeling.

The young men seem aware of it. Do they realize that this Harvard personage has given practically the whole of his life to the entertainment, the illumination and admonishment of students like themselves? That they are not to him merely themselves, as they sit in their chairs, but symbols of the generations that pass like the leaves of the elms? The evening at home may be changed from Monday to Wednesday—so a notice on the door proclaims—but the institution is immortal, and to how many such generations has Copeland read, as he will read to-night!

Will he really read? Yes, but first there must be fussy consideration of lamps and windows. This should be up, that down. Now the spectacles are lost. They must be in the office, two flights down. Off shoots the scout, called back for the key. The *right* key, Charles, have you the *right* key?—here. The young men busy themselves with tolerant and affectionate solicitude.

At last things are approximately and impermanently right. Copeland, with the fully focused attention of his audience, opens his book.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;  
The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
In ancient days by emperor and clown.

The voice, the passing night!—it is Copeland's true voice that speaks at last. The voice has sharp Down East inflections, its range is limited, but its sympathetic magic is potent. It leads one, by an art rarely histrionic and profound, through the dreaming vistas of Keats's poem to the heart of the Copeland legend.

The centre of every man's existence is a dream, they say—Chesterton says it in his essay on Scott. Deeper than habits, calamities, and sins lies his vision of himself, "as swaggering and sentimental as a penny novellette." Copeland's dream is no more sentimental than any other man's. But because it is an histrionic dream, its swagger is more visible. The manner, at once indifferent and vain, the superficial weaknesses, as crystalline as those of a child, and of much the same sort—the sort that need and claim approval and affection—seem to shield the dream of an artist of the stage. A highly accomplished and sophisticated artist, fertile in the discovery of means to enforce his power. An artist who never speaks from the stage without seeing himself from the audience.

Yet also an intuitive artist, who, like any fine actor, makes to his performance the supreme gift of himself.

A college campus is a stage, a platform is a stage, an academic chamber is a stage, if you choose to take it so. Here a man indisposed by temper or tradition for the actor's role may come into his own. I am not suggesting that when Copeland entered the Harvard English Department, as a humble corrector of themes in another man's course, he had any such conscious aim. He may not even have suspected that he had something personal and pre-eminently human to give the university that would more than compensate for lack of formal scholarship or higher degrees. But it is a fact that he did not strive to remedy his academic defects. He did not drudge for a Ph.D.—the Boylston Professor still lacks that mark of academic prestige. No, from the beginning his time and his heart went into his own peculiar educational inventions. That quasi-tutorial relation with his pupils, and with innumerable boys who were not his pupils, those voluntary classes in "reading aloud" which the Harvard men of the nineties remember with such warmth, though they did not contribute toward a degree, those public readings for "Town and Gown" in Sever 11, began almost immediately, and almost immediately made a name, and created an audience.

Copeland recalls how instinctively, at his first reading, in that intimidating Sever amphitheatre, he turned his chair from the sober elder townfolk—from the past—to face the future: college youth. That, of his many audiences, was not only the first but the real and final one. Youth could understand, as age could not so surely, the inspiration welling ever fresh out of the histrionic dream.

Most professors of literature present neatly dissected masterpieces to the minds of their students. Copeland has done very little dissecting. He has poured masterpieces whole into the souls of his hearers with a peculiar fervour of speech and accent that seem, though so perfectly in control, the discharge of some inner compulsion. What we see, especially inside a book, we may ignore. What we hear, really hear, in that fashion, we *feel*, like a kind of music. Literature and life fuse, or, rather, literature becomes the flower and consummation of life. The great writers of the past, the figures of their creation, are living, actual, understandable, ourselves. At their best, Copeland's reading of prose and poetry and his biographical lectures have had a breath of living genius.

That indented Maine coast where he grew up, among blue inlets, rocky isles, and tidal rivers, has, for the dreaming mind, the aspect of "faëry lands forlorn." The old Maine stock, from which he comes, is

leisurely and beauty-loving as well as pioneering. Aristocrats of the provinces, as good as anybody and even a little better, they are ever scornful of mediocre performance in life. The ghostly inward whip which they lay upon the shoulders of their descendants scourged Copeland, I feel sure, to prove his mettle in the world, to leap obstacles, by persistent courageous effort. And he certainly owes them the slighting accents with which names not loved, like Byron's, are dismissed from his lips; the caustic touch which seems to throw the light of some inward scorn upon his own peccadillos. These Maine folk are not very easily fooled, even about themselves.

It was on January 1st, 1825, that Charles Townsend Copeland's grandfather Lowell, descended from the second son of Percival, arrived with his wife in Robinston, twelve miles beyond Calais. His grandfather Copeland, on the other hand, was born in Boston, and migrated only as a young man to Norridgewock, on the Kennebec, where he edited, printed, and published a very creditable newspaper. The Boylston Professor, born in Calais in 1860, comes of four long-lived lines. He was the first of the lot to go to college, and to that fact he chooses to ascribe his lack of application to formal learning.

Graduating from Harvard in the class of 1882, he began in the uncertain manner of the artist race—to which we must admit this professor belongs—a series of attempts to adjust to the practical world. The most important were seven years of dramatic and book reviewing on a Boston newspaper. Here Copeland began to affirm the major passions of his life—interest in human beings, and books and plays and great persons, especially great persons of the stage, like his old friend Minnie Madder Fiske, and those others, Bernhardt, Modjeska, Booth, Jefferson, whose photographs hang on walls of Hollis 15. In the year 1892, at two-and-thirty, on his own application, he became an instructor in the Harvard English Department—then ruled by a group of pundits of Germanic scholarly tradition.

In his official *rôle* he remained an overworked freshman hack until the year 1905, when Dean Briggs asked him to renounce freshman teaching and take on an "advanced" course in writing. This, which proved an outstanding contribution to academic Harvard, was his first original teaching opportunity. He began also, with the honourable, if anomalous, title of "Lecturer," to give those favourite literary courses of his—Lives, Times and Characters of Men of Letters, Johnson and His Circle—humane courses both, stressing great men and great character, which brought the past to life by a process of recreation rather than erudition. Though Copey seemed addicted to the young man's world, he was never one of those Harvard professors who scorned

teaching women. He taught at Radcliffe thirty years, in fact, and has no more loyal adherents among Harvard than among Radcliffe graduates, who recall with gratitude the standards of literary taste he inculcated, the fresh interest he stirred in dead classics, the unobtrusive, even tender kindness, the frank abusive, derisive criticism, which young women were advised to take "like men." In University Extension work and Summer School teaching, he had similarly a marked popular success.

The Harvard Corporation made Copeland an Associate Professor in 1910, eighteen years after his first appointment. His Boylston Professorship, in which he succeeded Dean Briggs, came again fifteen years later, at the age of sixty-five—the age which in many colleges is that of retirement. Probably no other university in the country would have given a teacher so much freedom and so little recognition.

This slow gathering of public laurels had, however, its own advantages for Copeland. A *rara avis* among professors, a brilliant and somewhat "misunderstood" figure, who signified to his students, in a way they could scarcely define, the creative spirit, he engaged ardent loyalties and provoked curiosities usually denied to figure-heads. What other professor has an alumni association of his own?—The Charles T. Copeland Association brings "Copey" on to the Harvard Club of New York every winter for a much "featured" occasion, a dinner and a reading which draw former students from all over the country. Would Copeland's Christmas mail arrive in a truck, would those postcards from the faithful be forever in circulation, and those Harvard war letters fill several treasured volumes if he had not been for the greater part of his career a Pretender rather than a Prince? For that matter, would Copeland have become "Copey," the teacher who "took the curse off books"; would he have developed so surely into the tutor-at-large, the avuncular guide and philosopher, whom Harvard and Radcliffe youth was proud to call friend, if there had not been in him that X-quality that does not fit into professorial pigeon-holes?

Young American writers like to say, resenting the fact that they were over-taught by the meticulous, that writing cannot be taught at all. Copeland has no more over-taught writing than he has over-dissected the classics. His war upon dullness and bluff has been inspired by first-hand knowledge. He knew, from his personal experience in the newspaper world, something very definite about writing as a trade, and did not confuse journalism with literature. Like most teachers who take their profession with passion, he soon abandoned his secret desire to write, translated it into terms of other men's performance, past and future.

Certain little "editions" of the poets, with prefaces, appeared in the early Harvard days, an edition of Carlyle's *Letters to His Sister*, and an excellent short *Life of Edwin Booth*, which reveals much of the author's love for the stage. But writing is an exclusive business and Copey, like the mother of a family, did not have the heart to close his door.

"Who is it?"

"I'm James Smith, and I'm drunk, drunk, drunk!"

"Come in, drunken James!"

The door of Hollis 15 was not always on the latch, but it opened readily. The men who came, stayed. Their troubles, financial and amatory, their ambitions, their dreams—perceived almost before they were spoken by that sensitive perception, that power of vicarious identification with others which is Copey's, not only because he is himself, but because he has the literary and dramatic temper—became his own. Like a soul in migration he left his body to enter their future adventures. This youth must be urged to go round the Horn, that one sent to Oxford, this one assisted to a newspaper job, that one provided with a sound, remunerative business opening, or a wife with money. Meanwhile all must be urged to read, and "badgered" into doing good work. It is easy to see how they became charges upon a heart at once tender and humane, and a judgement worldly-wise. Gradually they aroused an interest so exclusive that it crowded out all personal ambition save that sole aim of influencing youth to read and write, and to comport itself well in the world.

The words of his former students are the surest commentary on his original method of teaching in English 12. The crux of it is a three-quarter-of-an-hour interview, every fortnight, in the Hollis office, in which the student *reads his work aloud* to the listening teacher. The method of the ear again—it was originated by chance, at a moment when Copeland could not use his eyes, and had to correct papers orally. But he quickly discovered that he had fallen upon a real pedagogic discovery.

On the occasion of my first conference [writes a recent student] he sat staring, out of an open window as I read. In the beginning I felt as though I were reading to emptiness outside the window, that none of my "gems" were being heard. I soon discovered that I was woefully mistaken. My "gems" were being considered, most of them condemned. I was told that they were bad, and why they were. I was made to see that the first approach to writing lay in humility, the second in honest sweating, not the arrogant confidence possessed by most undergraduate would-be *littérateurs*. At the same time I began to see where the honester, unconsidered portions

of the theme were better, and again why. All this in little comments which I had to jot down in the margin.

At the end of the conference I took from Copey's dictation his final opinion; and from that I learned the following things. First, that he was as sympathetic with all my efforts as I was myself, that he understood what I was trying to do and how the doing of it hurt. Second, that he was as humble in criticism as he made me feel I ought to be in learning to write, that he was living the helper to my individual needs and giving me a great deal of himself in doing so—that he was not dictating his opinions, and respected my views, if I was able to offer any proof of their validity.

He was always alive to the change and thirst for change in undergraduate character, and where he did not agree was able to sympathize. I began to realize his amazing freshness of mind and his understanding of undergraduate ambitions. In what would appear to be his narrowing confinement in the Yard, he has drunk so long of the spirit of youth, and so deep, that it has enlarged his soul. Copey will never be old.

Copey rules the class room as he does his public audiences with a kingly sceptre that has a malicious reach for the heels of the rebels. This gifted and singular personality, imprisoned in a thin and constricted frame, this teacher whom his most perceptive pupils have seen from two angles, the real presence, the stage presence, cannot tolerate an audience that is not wholly *his*, even to its coughs and sneezes. (That solemn admonition, "*Don't cough—don't!*" is oddly effective, even in the season of *grippe*.) Rows over steam-pipes and windows, to the abashment of terrorized janitors; demands for glasses of water that are not drunk; quips and cranks and savage gibes: these are most charitably interpreted as methods of concentrating attention.

It is reported that he arrived late one day in a Harvard class, with a melodramatic air deliberately overcharged.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, I have just had a fearful adventure. I was crossing Harvard Square, holding a book that my friend John Reed has just sent me—a volume inscribed to his old teacher—and one of those *devil-wagons* [taxis] nearly ran me down. I thank God, gentlemen, that I had it in me to hurl the volume at the head of the driver. It fell into the back seat. It went on to Boston."

The books from former pupils would make a sizable library, and be sure that Copey is as ready to read from Robert Benchley or Heywood Broun as from Kipling or the Book of Ruth. Men like John Reed, far as the poles from Copeland in political and social horizon, never become less close: "Is it just *inside* the Kremlin or just *outside* the Kremlin that Jack is buried?"

Copey's *Reminiscences*—one of those famous books that will never

be written—"Come for the manuscript in eight years," he wired the last applicant) would make a very complete inner history of the Harvard of the last thirty-five years. The golden period, so far as Copeland's own life goes, would be the twentieth-century years that preceded the war. During the war he made himself an informal recruiting-sergeant, as did so many men in the fifties, deprived of action themselves, and got out of the letters of his young friends a fine vicarious satisfaction. Since the War the objective new generation, under the sway of heroes of their own invention—the sceptical Strachey, the hard-hitting Mencken—query a little all that savours of "appreciation" as well as of mannerism in Copeland's biographical method. Yet there he still sits in Hollis 15, no longer technically a hero who needs support but an elderly gentleman with a well-organized tradition,—visited frequently by Barrymores and Bishops,—and, at last, an academic crown.

But the men who work with him—instead of visiting him like a museum specimen or a Harvard "sight," feel that Copey is unchanged. "Copey can never grow old." Nothing, if the truth were told, neither the academic honours nor the Charles T. Copeland Association, can alter the angle from which he looks, is condemned to look, at life: for it is the remove of the artist.

Copeland speaks in his *Life of Booth* of a man's debt to his career. His own debt to Harvard is the opportunity the university has offered for the satisfaction of a profound love and sympathy for youth. He speaks also, in this book, of "the separate pang" of the actor's lot, who sees the spiritual body of his art crumble before his natural body. That is, in a sense, for all his rich rewards, the prospective pang of this teacher whose sway owes so much to the histrionic dream. For Copey must, though surrounded and protected by ardent youth as few elders are, live ever solitary and by proxy, at the top of his creaking stairs. He must, to the end, yield up his personal essence as a sacrifice to his masters and let them speak their mysteries through his lips.

A highly sophisticated auditor attended one of Copeland's readings at the Summer School a few years ago. It was such an intolerably hot and stale July evening as only the Cambridge midsummer can provide. Copeland began with one of his best Biblical selections. But there was little response from the benches, and he felt it. Suddenly rising, he gave a keen glance about the hall. Then, quietly, he turned out the lamp beside his chair.

A signal that the reading was over? No, something more symbolic. It was, rather, as if he had turned out the personality of Charles T.

Copeland. In so doing, he summoned the personality of Lady Macbeth to rise out of the dimness.

He did not read. He did not recite. He did not act, in any definable way. By an *intention* only he achieved the tragic presence of that eternal sleep-walker. But it was enough. The spectator went out from a hall, now tense and magnetic, with the sense of having had one of the great dramatic revelations of her life. Something to set beside a performance by Booth himself.



# College Teaching

## A Chapter of Recollection

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY (1878- )

Readers of the *Saturday Review of Literature* know Dr. Canby as a sincere, objective, lucid critic. He was its editor from 1924 to 1936. Since 1922 he has published five volumes of essays on literature: *Definitions* (1922), *Definitions, Second Series* (1924), *American Estimates* (1929), *Classic Americans* (1931), and *Seven Years' Harvest* (1936). In 1939 appeared his most ambitious literary study, a scholarly life of Thoreau.

Dr. Canby has written two autobiographical books, both based on memories of the years before he rose to eminence in American criticism. *The Age of Confidence* (1934) is a picture of the nineties in America, as seen in Wilmington, Delaware, where the author spent his Quaker boyhood. *Alma Mater* (1936) is a study of "the Gothic Age of the American college," with the lens focused on Yale, where Dr. Canby was graduated in 1899, and where he taught English regularly from 1900 until 1916. These are not representative autobiographies. Neither is an introspective record of the author's own career or an omniscient, documented research into the history of his generation. Both are informal studies in the values of an age. Starting with the premise that communities like the Wilmington of the nineties and the Yale of the turn of the century have contributed, for better or worse, to the leadership of the America of the thirties, Dr. Canby has analyzed their contribution and tried to isolate yesterday's evils from yesterday's virtues. He has done it in a mood of quiet nostalgia, avoiding, on the one hand, the traditional lament for the glories of the good old days and, on the other, the conventional guffaws about the bustle and the bicycle. In short, he has shown the same intelligent tolerance and sincere objectivity which mark his literary criticism.

This objective analysis of values is clearly reflected in the following chapter from *Alma Mater*. Many writers have viewed college teaching from inside the campus fence and as many from the outside only. Dr. Canby is singularly qualified to observe it from both vantage points.

I WAS BROUGHT UP in a Philistine community where education was one of the lesser public utilities. Teaching as a profession was regarded by

From *Alma Mater: The Gothic Age of the American College*, by Henry Seidel Canby, copyright 1936, and reprinted by permission of Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., publishers.

my friends and family as a last resort for those who could not do anything else. An obvious explanation, that teaching was poorly paid, did not tell the whole story. The ministry was poorly paid, but met with no such mild but rather deadly disrespect; while dentistry, which could be profitable, was socially even less estimable than teaching.

There seems to have been an idea, not too clearly thought out, that the teacher, even the college teacher, did his work in a childish world from which adult men and women had escaped by taking up the really important tasks of life. The teacher lived on the margin of such vital affairs as business or running a household, and was perhaps not really an adult at all. It was always surprising to learn that a teacher had made money or fallen in love. Teachers were usually highminded and cultivated people, yet belonged, nevertheless, among the servile classes, a cut above a nurse. This was what they thought.

And yet the economic explanation was true also. By the beginning of our twentieth century the philosophy of competition had got such a grip upon the American imagination that making money and (with less agreement) spending money, had become a test of success. But a teacher ducked out of the competition at the beginning, which seemed a confession of inferiority. If the teacher was a "she" of course we were more tolerant.

My four years as a college undergraduate did not entirely uproot this prejudice, although I was shaken by my contacts with a few teachers so powerful that I was forced to regard them as I had been taught to regard other men. When, after graduation, I drifted into teaching I came into the faculty with a traditional respect for the bourgeois American's creed of business as the chief concern of normal man. (I was the first in nine known generations of a family to enter into a profession; I was the first from my circle of friends and relatives to escape from the profits system.) Something reached out from my mind toward ideals of scholarship, but on the other hand something shrank back by habit from the practitioners thereof, whose language, manner, humor, or lack of it, and ideas of success in life I was not yet prepared to understand. Gulliver felt somewhat as I did when, landing upon Laputa, he found that factories made learning, and conversation was about mathematics instead of money and love.

Very early in my career, which in its beginning was humble in the extreme—and fortunately so, since I knew just enough to keep one jump ahead of my classes—I brought my father to the club in our college town. He was to meet two of my superiors, elder statesmen in education for whom I had a profound respect. My father was the sweetest and most equable of men, deeply cultured in simple human relation-

ships, but not accustomed to discussions in which ideas were passed about wantonly and encyclopedic facts spilled as if everyone had plenty of them. The elder statesmen were bored and my father was puzzled, although he did his best to find something in his very American experience which would provide a meeting-place. As the talk went on he flushed, looking more and more to me for help, and at that instant a tiny idea was born in my mind of the true nature of this profession of teaching. It was a resultant of the inevitable conflict between theory and practice; it was built upon the ultimate duty of scholarship to give what was needed, and made doubly difficult by the inability or the refusal of human nature to take what it lacked and the failure of the teacher to measure his task. That day I saw for the first time the teacher's real problem.

For I think that teaching as a profession is woefully misunderstood, and frequently by its professors. Perhaps I should qualify this statement to read teaching of the humanities, which I know most about; yet I do not feel inclined to qualify it. It may be that teaching a technic such as playwriting or the building of bridges is a simple matter hard to misunderstand, yet I am quite sure that the instant the subject taught is used for training and expanding the mind the problem is much more complex than the simple formula: I know this; I tell it to you; now you know it—which seems to be what most laymen regard as teaching.

I never taught playwriting or metal work, but I have raised my temperature and strained my wits in the teaching of both English literature and English composition, with brief excursions into history and even logic. What I am surest of is that what I tried to teach was never so important as how I taught it. I can conceive of no subject of instruction so important that a pupil cannot get along without it, except reading, writing, and arithmetic, unless it be ethics and religion, which few teach nowadays. Of course the race has to have the sciences if it is to keep up its standard of living, architects must have calculus, and classicists Latin; but I am writing of the individual. What *he* needs is not necessarily Greek, or physics, or geography, but an education.

My first discovery when I began my career was that education is more concerned with ideals than with knowledge: a naïve discovery, but important. I never had the usual difficulties of young instructors, though I dreamed of them in tutor's nightmares, in which ink flew through the air while I escaped in my shirttails through a window. I was slight physically, unaccustomed to authority, unsure of my subject, uncertain in my methods. Nevertheless no class "rough-housed" me (a word of the period); when dogs were brought into my recitation they promptly went to sleep; when fisticuffs started on the back row

I had only to throw a question in that direction. Yet I nerved myself for my classes as for an ordeal, and relapsed after them into limp vacuity. For I quickly learned, intuitively, crudely, yet I learned, that whether it was the history of the English language, or Shakespeare that I was trying to teach, the actual conflict was not with ignorance but with college life and all that it implied; and, behind it, with the ideas and ideals of an American society in which materialism dominated action and governed thought. One could plant facts by waving a mark book, but when it came to ideas, beliefs, ideals, the soil was stubborn.

## II

There were five schools of the theory of teaching in my day: the hard-boiled, the indifferent, the idealistic, the factual, and the enthusiastic.

The hard-boiled school I respected; yet something in their tenets made me stubbornly rebellious. There was a Cambridge graduate on our faculty, an Englishman older than myself, with whom I argued over many a stein of beer. We have the stuff, he would say; let the little lambs come and get it if they wish. If they are goats who won't eat good food, that is their affair. Why should I coddle them?

And so he saved his emotions for high struggles with figured thinking, bred a few good students, made a reputation for his scholarship, and got through his teaching with only the labor required to talk clearly for fifty minutes.

I tried to feel his way. I knew that we coddled the undergraduate. I was aware that between his hearty feedings on college life we tried to wheedle our doses of instructions, like cod liver oil, into his unwilling mouth. I felt that if I could stand on a pedestal, like my Cambridge friend, saying "I have it; come and get it or stay away," I should be more respected and so would my subject. But I believed that those I most wanted to teach would never come because they would never understand why they should come. My American tradition held me back from such downrightness. After all, our job had been, and was, to educate all of the people. What right had I to keep Shakespeare and Milton for the tiny minority of American undergraduates who would take to them naturally, who would read them with a self-determined resolve to understand? The specialist might be hard-boiled, and properly so. The Englishman might be exclusive, for in England education had always been regarded as a privilege, and hence a specialty. With us, education was what religion had been to our ancestors, something to be spread abroad to all who had minds that could be saved. This meant that those who felt as I did worked harder over a weary football player, or a perfectly cynical broker's son, than with the fine minds already lit

with enthusiasm for learning which we were sure to find somewhere in our classes. The natural result was that our energies were exhausted in trying to educate the almost uneducable, while in any faculty meeting the discussion never got far from the lame ducks and the bluffers, and what to do about low marks.

The indifferent school of teachers had long since accepted the hopelessness of this endless siege of undergraduate interest. Without admitting it, least of all to themselves, they had become defeatists in education. The academic life was pleasant—long summers, short hours, easy requirements for the unambitious once they were placed, abundant opportunities for spending sensibly and agreeably a private income if you were fortunate enough to have one. Nor did a man have to teach or to write with distinction in order to get his job and hold it. There were innumerable committees needing executive talent, there were sports to be supervised, rules to be made, morale to be seen to. And there was the curriculum, which, like the power plant of a factory, had to be overhauled or redesigned every other year. A personable man of character could keep himself reasonably busy through an academic lifetime without doing one hour of really effective teaching or writing one page that lifted above routine. He became, so to speak, a dean or president without portfolio and without real educational responsibility, and was often better known, and more quickly rewarded, than the true scholar or the born teacher, whose light shone less abroad among the alumni and in the college town.

Nor was the siege of the undergraduate mind necessarily unpleasant, once the besieging became an end in itself. These indifferents imitated medieval warfare. Against a wall of resistance they threw up another wall of requirements behind which they lived very comfortably while the conflict remained in *status quo*. And if scholarship went forward never a millimeter by their efforts, at least they made no minor errors, pursued no lost causes, did no damage to convention, and proved to the suspicious American world outside that a professor could be as much of a good fellow, and as harmless, as a vice president of a bank. Yet I fear they were not harmless. Their dead hand rests on many a mind yet.

As for the idealists, I wonder if I have the right name for them. Such a bullheaded generation I have never known in any other profession; for daily they went out to fight for their ideas, and daily they were defeated. And yet stupid as some of them were, and blind as to what was going on and the source of their difficulties, as were most, I cannot but feel that they were the only realists in the college of my day. Obstinate determined to make what they thought was truth prevail,

they alone intuitively saw, or at least felt and dimly perceived, college education for what it essentially was—a battle with the natural cussedness, consistent short-sightedness, and obstinate resistance of the human animal to whatever uncomfortably raises him above the brute. They were much too dogmatic, much too inexperienced in life, very much too cerebral in their theories and naïve in their emotions to be often entirely right. But they were on the right side of education even when they were absurdly wrong in their estimates of what their young animals needed. They were on the only side that really wanted a victory.

I numbered my best friends among the idealists, yet it was extraordinary how widely we differed in items of belief. Some of them, having hitched their wagons to an earlier century, were concerned only with the fallacies of our own. They had certain advantages over the rest of us who felt that the nineteen hundreds were of considerable importance, since it was clear that we should have to do our living in them. A complete faith in the *mores* of, let us say the age of Dr. Johnson, produced eventually in the teacher who felt that way a character so eccentric from our *mores* as to fascinate modern youth by his very difference. His arguments also had the force of resting upon a precedent of glamorous living. Instead of feeble remonstrances against the trivial and the sensational in our college life, where football practice or trying to make a fraternity engaged our best energies, these praisers of old days could throw wits, beauties, and statesmen at the student head, and show life fully lived in a manner so different as to challenge the dullest intelligence.

Other idealists of my acquaintance were soaked in romantic moralism. Literature was written, according to them, to illustrate the vices and virtues. Shakespeare proved that character made fate, and the lyrics of Tennyson were less "significant" than his sermons in verse. Their students were not surprised; they had been taught that way in school. Yet I soon concluded that to squeeze ethics from one's teaching of literature or history was to dodge the far more difficult task of making the culture of the past at home in the imagination of the undergraduate.

The factual teachers were the happiest. They were competent men who knew every detail of their subjects. For them teaching was a job in agriculture. Break up the field of the mind by threats of plowing its wild oats under. Plant the seeds of honest fact—declensions, dates, formulas. Reap the crop at examination time, and woe to the boy with an empty basket. The system would have been perfect if it had not been for the complete lack of fertilizer. The grain came back to the farmer not hundredfold, but one in a hundred, and that one often moldy.

Nevertheless, the factual was the school of teaching most popular among the faculty; naturally so, for it could do no harm, and since facts in all subjects were the indispensable beginnings of wisdom, might do more good than the uncertainties of theorizing and interpretation. Facts could stimulate also, and there was little danger that they would stimulate too much.

What masses of facts I have heard poured out in the classroom! How many facts, more or less accurate, I myself have dumped on my classes! What myriads of alleged facts I have read in test papers! There is something sane and sensible about a fact. Given the coefficients, can you or can you not plot a curve? Do you or do you not know the relative dates of Charlemagne and El Mansur? Why did the crustaceans fail to evolve like man? What happened when Horatio met Hamlet after the latter's escape from the pirates? If I were to go back to general teaching again I should either break my forehead anew on the old stone wall erected ages since to shut out ideas and ideals, or happily and wholeheartedly go in for facts. The teaching of linguistics must be joyful, for it is nearly all facts. An hour with a good list of factual questions to propose is like a game. I have seen one of my own professors become so fascinated with the sport of dropping queries like depth bombs here and there, that he forgot to mark, forgot to dismiss, his sweating class. For there is an immense satisfaction in the concrete for both teacher and taught. The well-crammed youngster is like a siphon bottle. Press the handle and he fizzes in a welcome relief from pressure. And the happy professor well stuffed with hard questions of fact is like the gardener who whiffs spray on a plant and sees the worm turn up his belly in a just agony.

It was facts I began to teach, and never afterward did I have more efficient recitations. There was a sporting atmosphere in the classroom life of the early nineteen hundreds. Of the "prof" it was expected that he would prepare shrewd questions touching upon hidden deposits of fact easily missed in preparation (unless by chance the student had an old book with arrows inked in pointing to the treasure). The teacher asked, the pupil replied. He said he did not know, which was zero. He gave the right answer, which in our mystic marking system counted four. Or he entered upon a rambling disquisition which was meant, and intended to be understood, as a bluff. Could teacher corner him into making a statement of fact, which was sure to be wrong? If he could, that also was zero. If teacher could not catch him out, the sporting code required that he should get a complimentary two, which was passing, and he complained if he did not receive it. The class, expert

in games, if not in the subject of instruction, watched the struggle, excited sometimes to the point of groans or applause.

I was cured of the factual method as a major sport in education by a slender, sensitive youngster who had been educated by private tutors abroad. He was too intent upon his own thinking to answer directly my simple question as to what Prince Hal thought of Falstaff, by which of course I meant what he *said* he thought. Instead, as one interested mind to another, he began what was, by definition, clearly a bluff, yet soon became a query as to whether Shakespeare himself was not, like all playwrights, prone to bluff, letting speeches stand from history which he had been too lazy to rewrite. The class, which had set him down for a two, withdrew their favor when he went on with the discussion for the sake of an argument, which he seemed to take more seriously than his mark. But I, with my neat questions to test laborious reading all pat, felt like a fool, and was one. The happy solace of asking contentedly, "Was it?" and hearing "It was" or "It wasn't," the day's duty thus done, was nevermore mine. And yet I did not forget, nor do I forget here, that it is upon fact that tradition—by which alone we safely live—rides from the past into the present.

There was also the enthusiastic school of teaching. It was a school to which I would gladly have been inspired. The enthusiast was a peculiar product of the *fin de siècle*—a by-product of revivalism, which the great days of Moody and Sankey and William Booth had made infectious to educated men. But the educated men in our day were not often attracted to religion. Religion was either too dogmatic for them or too emotional. Herbert Spencer had destroyed the prestige of theology, and they were well aware that William James had described conversion as a phenomenon of psychology. Hence many men with a fire of enthusiasm for the good, the beautiful, and the true turned to art, to the wonders of nature, and, most of all, to literature. One could be enthusiastic about Shakespeare when it had already become a little vulgar to be enthusiastic about being saved. Even the technic was the same. Familiar comparisons, good stories, histrionics were as effective in lectures upon Shelley as in rantings upon the Blood of the Lamb.

The students responded. In these men so fired with the excitements of their subject, they recognized a rebellion against the formalism they also hated, and a sympathetic relationship with their own easy enthusiasms in college life. And yet I could never become one of the enthusiasts, though I owed much to them. What this sort of teaching required was a special gift: not so much oratory or histrionics, although these were valuable, as an uncritical faith in the miracle of knowledge. It required a special secretion of simple, intense minds, with a genius for



communication. The enthusiasts were born not made. They were our prima donnas, who triumphed even when their voices went sharp or flat of the truth.

And when they had done their work the soil was plowed up but not planted. They made learning seem desirable, but left it an emotion and a mystery. They gave their hearts, but few ideas with them. Their converts did not relapse, like the drunkards and prostitutes won by the revivalists; they remained friends to culture, but stopped there unless someone took them farther along the road. And yet in that boisterous college, with its tacit agreement that only mirth and social success really counted, to be even a friend of culture was an achievement. As a young teacher I could never let myself go in the kind of enthusiasm that sent classes home burning to read everything from the *Koran* to *Dorian Gray*, because I was uncomfortably aware of how little I knew of the realities that explained both Mohammed and Oscar Wilde. Yet I envied those who had no inhibitions in their passion for books—any books. I felt for them the gratitude and reluctant admiration of Hamlet for the actor who wept over Hecuba. That fellow got his audience, and so did they.

I cast my lot, therefore, with the idealists, which name I now discard, as being inaccurate, and call them the philosophic in teaching: a sect which has always persisted in the crooked but fascinating road of education, although many of its followers have had little claim to be called philosophers. Yet what is philosophy in practice but wondering what it is all about, with a passion for trying to discover?

### III

The college teacher, especially if he is young, has a curious human experience, both intimate and remote. He sits half the day examining minds at just the age when they have reached full intelligence and yet cannot either entirely conceal or entirely reveal their texture. He has boys and girls of the best age for playing upon, and they are a picked youth, if not always picked for his especial purposes. And they are charming, more than ever before, more than ever afterward. Outside the classroom they become easily his friends, though never really intimate; inside, they are deferential, even in their determination to resist knowledge, and often frank in what they say, though their inner lives are infinitely withdrawn. They bring their background with them, and not their words so much as their wills are intensely expressive. Teaching such a class is like lifting a thin and waving plank. It is never steady, always ready to bend and fall—an instant's release of the grip and it is down to earth.

In my day we sat on a raised dais with thirty or more youngsters sprawled beneath us. It was like an established church where the pastor, hired to save souls, faces a congregation that has come because it is Sunday. We seated the students alphabetically, making for our own use a penciled plan of the seats, each of which was numbered, and writing on it the names of the students in their assigned locations. Thus when "Townsend" was called, the six feet of shambling drowsiness which rose to its feet could be readily identified. Without this simple device there was always the chance that some little Russian Jew would grab an easy question and sell his knowledge for an A.

At first one's class was a sea of faces, pimply, vacuous, keen, sulky, and amiable, all dissolving into a blur of washed and rosy youth. But soon (and Buddhist priests and doctors of the Sorbonne must have had the same experience), the room disintegrated into familiar types. The pleasantest, I think, was the well-mannered, neatly dressed boy from the orthodox preparatory schools. He was deferential to teacher, polite to the scrawny high-school boy beside him. Yet he was still all boy and at each moment of relaxation would tickle his schoolmate on the other side, and be slyly punched in return, the two of them like puppies trying hard not to roll over and cuff and bite. Yet put those well-trained boys on the football field where serious life for them began, and they would tackle low and slug and viciously kick when the umpire was not looking. A faint aroma of cereal and cream exuded from these prep-school boys. They had nice mothers and generous fathers. Their world was already made for them, and, like blooded colts, they were expected to play, because their future work was to be a fierce competition to make the family richer. They had the arrogance and the gentleness of the aristocrat, without his detachment from life. They were being groomed for the capture or retention of privilege and its enjoyment. Every one of them expected to start in business or professional life at the bottom and to come to the top as easily as he rushed a ball past untrained opponents. The type was Spartan rather than Athenian; and, like the Spartans, they were quite inaccessible to new ideas, having closed their minds at sixteen or seventeen upon a code of success which left no room for speculation.

These fine boys with their good voices, their courtesy, and self-assurance, would sit the hour in deferential boredom, then, at the word of dismissal, crowd the doorway in a sudden release of energy, leaving the young teacher in an agony of frustration. For they had everything—health, good looks, will, character, reserves of energy—everything but open minds, everything but cracks in their stiff brains into which ideas could flow! With consummate skill gained in long experience with

clever teachers and the right text books, they gave Cæsar exactly what Cæsar was supposed to get from them, the modicum of facts, the statements of the last lecture reduced to a formula, enough to get a B in Freshman year when the footing was still unsteady, just enough for a C in Senior year when the danger of flunking was past. You liked them as you liked blooded show dogs. Like show dogs, they defeated every attempt to teach their well-bred intellect new tricks.

Scattered here and there in every class were the "grinds," called by the prep-school dilettantes either "greasy grinds" or just "grinds." Actually the differences between the two varieties were subtle. The typical grind was a survival of the old college that trained chiefly for teaching and the ministry. He was usually the quiet and bloodless member of a family, afraid of rough sports, averse to competition, seeking refuge in books. His face was blank, his mind was a sponge which squeezed dry and filled again without cellular change. The young teacher found him trying, since he did everything he was told, believed all he heard, studied everything assigned to him, and at the end wrote papers that were correct with a deathly perfection of the commonplace which showed how ineffective education could be unless it touched the emotions, of which he had none.

The "greasy grind" was a racial or social variant of the plain grind. The greasy grind seldom changed his collar. He had a sneaking cleverness which taught him to snap up the hard questions in easy courses, thus collecting high marks as a protection against a world that, quite properly, wished to keep him down. He would argue with teacher for ten minutes trying to get a B changed into an A; but he had no intellectual curiosity. Education for him was a coin, useless unless you could buy something within it. The dilettante could sometimes be shocked into a realization that there were other worlds than his, and thus other values in living; but the greasy grind was both unchangeable and inescapable, a fly buzzing about your weary head.

Another and very different type of industrious student in those classes is well recognized now, but was then regarded by the pink and well-soaped elect as just another undesirable. The second generation from the East of Europe was beginning to come to college—Polish Jews with anæmic faces on which were set dirty spectacles, soft-eyed Italians too alien to mix with an Anglo-Saxon community, seam-faced Armenian boys, and now and then a Chinese. These, except the last, were all in college to learn how to live in America. Their mien was apologetic; you could see them watching with envious curiosity the courteous indifference of the superior race; they took little part in discussions and asked for no credit. Yet often their more flexible minds could be felt

playing round and round the confident Anglo-Saxons, admiring, skeptical, puzzled, and sometimes contemptuous. Occasionally there would be a hint of the future, when some Chinese boy, caught off his guard, and forgetting the convention of the classroom which was to answer a question and sit down, would give a *précis* of the entire lesson, and perhaps the previous one and the next, which only a French intellectual could have equalled. Or some Russian Jewish exile, asked to comment on an Ibsen play, and losing control of his guarded intellect, would expound a social philosophy that made the class squirm as if a blast of fire had scorched the seats of their comfortable pants.

Every class had also its freaks, which in those college days was a familiar term with a definite meaning. And nothing could have better revealed the nature of our college community than the diversity of types which were all called, for convenience and to indicate their difference from the true-blue college man, freaks. A freak was a nonconformist. He might be a prep-school boy of good family who had failed somehow to take the right impress from the prep-school mold. He might be, and often was, a son of the very rich or of artistic bohemians, who had been educated in Europe and was ill at ease in our Philistine Zion. He might be a potential homosexual distracted by his own unrecognized perversity. He might be, but rarely was, a little crazy. Sometimes he was merely an adult intellect in the society of adolescents, who refused to waste his time in organized athletics, although obviously competent, who declined fraternity elections, and was obsessed by a morbid interest in chemistry or philology. All such were freaks.

The Spartan parallel again holds good, since the arts in this question of freakishness were especially suspect. To be musical and indulge in music privately was a sure sign of freakishness, as bad as private drinking or the reading of poetry in seclusion. The banjo, the mandolin, and the guitar were respectable, since skilful players could "make" the instrumental clubs and so gain social recognition; but proficiency on the violin was a sure sign of something wrong, as was skill on the piano not confined to "beating the box," and also singing of "classic" music, radical ideas, a taste for the society of professors, silk pajamas, an interest in art, careful English, long hair (except on football heroes), uncollegiate clothes, and a lack of interest in sports. The freak was a person dangerous to make friends with. Only religion, thanks to our evangelical heritage, was allowed eccentricities of self-expression, for it was a part of the code.

Hence the young teacher, himself a mild nonconformist since otherwise he would never have gone into teaching, was often embarrassed by the sudden drop in classroom temperature when, misled or ignorant,

he gave a freak the floor and his approval. The boy who compared Milton to Bach, the youth who knew the Italian primitives in the art school, the freak who asked whether Christ was not a good socialist, and the exquisite who actually articulated his English, and quoted French in a foreign accent—call upon any one of these, and all motion forward was stopped for that day. An Alexandrian Greek could have met with no more disapproval if asked to address the Conscript Fathers of the Roman republic.

What saved those of us who tried to be philosophers in our rôle of teaching was another, and fortunately unfailing, contribution from America to our college classes. I remember well those first days of each teaching year: the confident moment when one looked down upon fresh faces in the old seats and hoped that this time at last faith would be justified, and then the quick disillusion as the herd rounded up into the same old assortment of mavericks, mixed breeds, and stolid beef cattle. Yet as with ranging question and hopeful reading of test papers we sifted and searched, always in some unexpected corners would be found those quiet minds, tenacious, reserved, cautious, practical, and yet ready to sight an idea and pursue it, and apply it, and keep faith with it—not speculative, not logical, but unshakeable in confidence that most problems can be solved—which are the best products of the great American experiment. Sometimes it was character, sometimes it was sanity, sometimes it was intellectual courage which is very different from intellectual daring, that one found and relied upon to give some coherence to the struggle to civilize such discordant elements when oneself was so imperfectly civilized.

#### IV

I never failed to get such minds in my classes but once. Then I was assigned to a division of "repeaters," boys who were being allowed to go through their deficient Freshman work again in order that their invaluable services on various teams or managerships, or as merry drunkards, should be retained at least until Christmas. And then the issue was so clear, David against Goliath, that the class became a sparring match conducted in high good humor, and with rules observed by both sides, according to which it was agreed that if I caught them they were out; with the result that a side wave from the strenuous competitions of college life washed through that classroom, football leviathans memorized Shakespeare and liked him, and boozers defended Falstaff. A committee waited on me at the end of the year, saying that I had been a good sport, and offering to teach me an infallible method for catching bluffers before they got to home plate.

I met one of that class last year, a good-natured broker, fat now and a little seedy since 1929. "I remember your class," he said. "It's the only one I do remember. I got to like that guy Hamlet. I meant to read more about him some time. But you know how it is—I had to work when I quit college."

They all intended to work when they left college. That was why teaching in those days was exciting. There was no belief in the student's mind that what you taught had vital relation with real work, or, for that matter, with real life. You felt, and rightly, that it might be the last chance for most of them to come into contact with any values not purely utilitarian.

I wondered then, but do not wonder now, at that excitement, which kept us, the young teachers, talking, brooding, dreaming over our job, which after all was miserably paid, little respected, and three-quarters of it a routine as dull as a clerk's—with the added psychological danger of acquiring arrogance, pedantry, and dogmatism, which are the occupational diseases of those who spend their lives directing the intellects of the young.

I do not wonder now, because it is so clear that we were on the firing line. The pre-Civil War culture of the East had grown stale or genteel. The colleges were filled with the second generation of the industrial pioneers, who had been brought up in a tradition of *laissez-faire* and the devil catch the hindmost. The boys we faced were nourished on a great allusion, and so well nourished that there was room for little else in their minds. They believed with that implicit faith which is so much more powerful than doctrine that the rest of their lives would be spent in a Great Struggle for wealth and privilege, where the best grabbers would win, and where only freaks and dreamers would take time to speculate upon what it was all about and whether the result was happiness. The heir to a banker's million was just as much under the spell of the necessity to be strenuous as the son of a Jewish pants-presser. Indeed if anything, it was the well-born and wealthy who were surest that making money was essential for their safety and would mean for them success.

And since the country was really behind them, and the times favored their ambitions, while the churches had lost their hold upon idealism, or, like the Y. M. C. A., praised such success as the only antidote to the vices of idleness, we young teachers, who were young enough to be sensitive to the confident materialism of those decades, were forced to play the part of Isaiahs preaching another God than Mammon. Irritated by our helplessness, we would make sermons out of poetry and tracts for the times from prose that was meant to be delightful. Or puzzled

and discouraged, we would yield to the current tendency, and turn our classrooms into doctors' offices where bad children were given stiff doses that were sure to do them good. Or we would get through with the whole routine as easily as possible so that we could attend to our own affairs, which often were quite as materialistic as the steel business or corporation law.

But sometimes some of us went at it differently, and, skeptical, disillusioned, defeated, fought for our ideals again and again with an intensity that was almost lyrical. We knew that the struggle was between two views of civilization, between two ideas of living, between two types of mind, variants of the tender and the tough. It was our feeble repetition of an agelong conflict—Plato versus John Rockefeller, Shakespeare versus Benjamin Franklin, Milton against the stock exchange and the Y. M. C. A. This we felt, and that was why an instructor in English on fifteen hundred dollars a year was often a happy man.

# The Modern Gothic

VINCENT SHEEAN (1899- )

The life of James Vincent Sheean began unexcitingly enough. He was born of plain Irish parents in rural Illinois. After a quiet boyhood he passed three and a half years of disillusionment at the University of Chicago. On leaving college he got a job with the Chicago *Daily News* and lasted only two or three weeks. But when in the early months of 1921 he turned his back on Illinois and took a train for the East, the excitement began. Following an eye-opening year in New York digging up lurid copy for another *Daily News*, he sailed for the old world. There he worked as a foreign correspondent, first for the Chicago *Tribune* and then for the North American Newspaper Alliance. Wherever history was being made in Europe and Asia during the twenties, the tall, handsome correspondent from Chicago was on the spot. He was with the peace conference at Lausanne and with the army of occupation in the Ruhr. He was in Italy when Mussolini marched on Rome. He penetrated twice into the wild land of the Rif to interview Abd-el-Krim, the Moroccan chieftain who was leading the revolt against Spain in 1925. He was in the thick of the Communist revolution in China in 1927 and the outbreak between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine in 1929. The mere listing of these experiences is a cub reporter's dream of paradise.

But Sheean's *Personal History* (1935) is a far cry from the hair-breadth tradition of foreign corresponding which Richard Harding Davis bequeathed to Hollywood. "The Modern Gothic," the very first chapter, indicates that this autobiography is no ordinary work of objective reporting. Here Sheean is concerned not only with the evils of the American college scene but also with the evolution of his own personal awareness of those evils. And behind the exciting events of the decade between his first consciousness of race at the university and his presence at the bloody racial struggle in the Holy Land lies the introspective narrative of a young man's effort to relate himself to the world-shaking history of his time—"to give this unique possession, this one life, somehow, a relation to the world of which it was a tiny segment—to attach it and articulate it, so that comprehension might eventually light up the darkness in which it has to be continued." Inspired by his intimate friendship with Rayna Prohme, the remarkable American woman whose work for the revolution in Hankow and tragic death in Moscow are recounted in the book's most haunting pages, Sheean became in the end a convert to her cause.

The author of *Personal History* has published three other accounts



of his wanderings: *An American Among the Riffii* (1926), *The New Persia* (1927), and *Not Peace But a Sword* (1939). The most recent is an analysis of the fateful events in Europe between March, 1938 and March, 1939, with particular emphasis on the victory of Fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Sheean has also published three novels of the modern scene, *The Anatomy of Virtue* (1927), *Gog and Magog* (1930), and *The Tide* (1933); two widely read historical novels, *Sanfelice* (1936) and *A Day of Battle* (1938); and a collection of short stories, *The Pieces of a Fan* (1937). But *Personal History* remains his best known work. Its influence has been far-reaching. When John Gunther wrote in 1939, "Vincent Sheean is the father of us all," he was crediting Sheean with founding the modern vogue of autobiographies by foreign correspondents. Some of these have been superficial and ephemeral; others, like Gunther's *Inside Europe* (1936) and the recent *Berlin Diary* (1941) of the radio reporter William Shirer, have helped to transform the reporter in the popular mind from the legendary acrobat of an action thriller into an indispensable analyst of modern history. None of Sheean's successors, however, has quite equaled his achievement of blending together irony and pathos, exciting narrative and keen exposition, in a prose of real literary value.

THE ARMISTICE CAME when I was eighteen. What it meant to the war generation I can only imagine from the stories they tell; to me it meant that we in the University of Chicago, that mountain range of twentieth-century Gothic near the shores of Lake Michigan, went out of uniform and into civilian clothes.

The world has changed so much that it seems downright indecent to tell the truth: I was sorry when the war ended. I fumed with disappointment on the night of the false armistice—the celebrated night when the American newspapers reported the end of the war some days before it happened. We were all patriots then. We knew nothing about that horror and degradation which our elders who had been through the war were to put before us so unremittingly for the next fifteen years. There were millions of us, young Americans between the ages of fifteen or sixteen and eighteen or nineteen, who cursed freely all through the middle weeks of November. We felt cheated. We had been put into uniform with the definite promise that we were to be trained as officers and sent to France. In my case, as in many others, this meant growing up in a hurry, sharing the terrors and excitements of a life so various, free and exalted that it was worth even such hardships as studying trigonometry. So we went into uniform and marched about the place from class to class like students in a military academy; listened to

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learned professors lecturing about something called "War Aims"; lived in "barracks"; did rifle drill. The rifles were dummies, and the "barracks" were only the old dormitories rechristened, but such details made little difference. We played at being soldiers for a few months with tremendous seriousness, and then the glorious uproar to which we had been preparing our approach suddenly died down. Our part of the war had been a prelude to something that did not take place.

And when demobilization came at last the prospect of returning to the regular life of the University had become repellent to me. I had nobody to persuade but my mother, who was still too thankful for the Armistice to make many objections. Consequently I went job hunting and spent three months as secretary to a millionaire builder and real estate operator in the Chicago financial district. It was there, hanging out a window above the crevasse of LaSalle Street, that I watched the Black Hawk Division come home. Waving flags and the thump of a military march were enough to stir me to any extravagance; we all shouted and waved and winked back the hysterical tears. Those were patriotic days.

My employer was an odious little man who had quarreled with his wife and disinherited his son because the latter wanted to go on the stage. He was a brilliant entrepreneur, the little man: he used to point with pride to the ceilings of the skyscraper in which he had his office, saying, "That ceiling is a good six inches shallower than the law allows. You can always arrange things if you know how. I got eight extra stories into this building by that little detail." When I inquired if the building was likely to fall down he sniffed contemptuously. "Buildings don't fall down," he said. The building did start to fall down some years later, was condemned and demolished. By an unfortunate accident, its builder was not buried under the ruins.

He sent me on one occasion to collect rents from the impoverished tenants of a village he owned in Indiana. It was a horrible experience from which I escaped as quickly as I could, but the thought of it came back to me for years. The tenants of the wretched little Indiana town worked in a coal mine belonging to my employer when they worked at all, but they had not worked for many months. They lived in houses belonging to him (if you could call such hovels houses) and bought their food from stores belonging to him. I was to collect what I could of the back rent owed on the disgraceful shacks in which they were obliged to live. I was a failure at the job, for the sight of the life into which children were there being born disorganized whatever efficiency I possessed as a secretary. That day in the little mining town was my introduction to capitalism at work, and it filled me, even then, with

disgust. I blamed the busy little entrepreneur as well as the system of which he was a part, and it was not long before the idea of continuing to work for him became insupportable. "Business" (if this was business) bored, irked and revolted me, and I determined to do whatever I could to avoid being involved in it again.

In the spring of 1919, therefore, I went back to the University and stayed on throughout the summer to make up for lost time. My education up to then had been a sorry failure. I had never made any headway with science, mathematics or the classical languages. Of the first two I remembered nothing; of the second I remembered just one Greek sentence, *enteuthen exelaunei* ("and the next day he marched onward")—this not because it had any stirring significance for me, but because it marked the welcome end of nearly every chapter in the *Anabasis*.

I had derived, it was true, considerable pleasure of a low order from some other academic pursuits in my first two years of college. I had come to the University knowing some Italian, German, and French (particularly French), and could easily make a better showing in these subjects than my contemporaries. My favorite trick had been to register for courses in which I was unlikely to encounter anything I did not already know. Such conduct was lazy and dishonest, but you could make out a good case for the theory that young people were all lazy and dishonest when they could be. Certainly what the undergraduates called "snaps" (i.e., courses easy to get through without undue effort) were always crowded in my day at the University. The football players, the social lights, the pretty co-eds, and all the other students who regarded study as an inconvenient detail in college life, rushed to inscribe themselves for "snap" courses. I was in a more advantageous position than some of my fellows for wasting time, since more courses were "snaps" for me. I could go to a series of lectures on Victorian Prose, for example, and be confident of hearing nothing new; similarly, in French, with the novels of Victor Hugo or the plays of Molière. I had read altogether too much in the two languages, thanks to a bookish childhood. There was thus a group of studies open to me at the University in which I could, without working or learning, impress my instructors sufficiently to make a good record.

More than two years of my three and a half at the University of Chicago had already been wasted in this way. It was a kind of confidence game of which the victim was, of course, myself. I did well enough in the subjects I already knew to make up for my failures in the subjects I did not know and was too lazy to study. I was too undisciplined, too indolent, and too dishonest to force myself to learn what did not interest me. And it was not until that summer of 1919

that I began to realize the silliness of such an approach to what ought to be one of the great experiences of a life. The University of Chicago in summer was invaded by hordes of earnest men and women from the smaller colleges and schools of the Middle West, working towards their master's or their doctor's degree. These thin, spectacled myrmidons, hump-backed from carrying armfuls of books up and down academic steps for many years, filled the cool gray corridors and covered the green lawns I had always thought reserved for pretty girls and long-legged youths. The summer school, I discovered, was an altogether different affair from the ordinary academic year. If you tried to talk to a summer student during a lecture, a cold glance through glittering spectacles was the only reply. The brilliant hot sun of a Chicago July threw into merciless relief all the unloveliness of these dank visitors from the provincial colleges of Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. Their presence was somehow unbecoming, both to their surroundings and to the general fitness of things. I resented them for two or three weeks, and on the few occasions when I saw my vacationing friends, the undergraduates who had finished their college year in June, we were exceedingly witty about the looks, manners, lives, and minds of the pitiable summer students. There were probably not half a dozen of these bookworms, we calculated, who could dance the fox trot decently.

But as the summer study advanced I became more and more uncomfortable about them. They were not beautiful, but neither were they ignorant. They were always putting me to shame, somehow or other. I was not to remember much about most of the studies of that summer; only one was vivid in retrospect. It was a fairly advanced course in French—the poetry of Victor Hugo, all of it, including every pitiless line of *La Légende des Siècles*. The instructor was a visiting bigwig from one of the Eastern universities, a Frenchman with a German name. He used to conduct the course in an informal fashion, lecturing some of the time, reading occasionally, and starting discussions whenever the spirit moved him. It was assumed that students in such a course as this would be mature and educated enough to know something besides the actual subject matter itself. Comparisons were always popping up, were constantly invited. Most of the students—there may have been twelve or fifteen, men and women—were well past thirty, and probably all of them taught French literature somewhere or other. In that company, through July and August, I first began to be ashamed of my evil ways, and no amount of smug scorn for the bookworms could disguise the fact.

*"Vous trouverez ici sans doute que Hugo a beaucoup emprunté à*

*Chateaubriand; n'est-ce pas, Mademoiselle?*" the professor would inquire innocently, smiling across his desk at an eager spinster from Indiana. And then off she would go, talking about Hugo and Chateaubriand in a French accent that would have been incomprehensible to either of those gentlemen—but talking, just the same, with information and intelligence. The professor would argue with her; others would join in; and it appalled me that I could not even follow their battle from afar. I had never read a word of Chateaubriand; my interest in Christianity was almost nonexistent; I had no real idea why it had ever seemed intellectually important to Victor Hugo or to anybody else. And I looked at the summer students in amazement. Their excitement over such subjects actually brought color to their wan faces; they could smile, make jokes, go through all the movements of living organisms when their attention was aroused.

My salvation was that the instructor was a Frenchman. If he had been an American or an Englishman he would have seen at once that my glibness in French was a sheer accident, and that I actually understood nothing of the turmoil through which Victor Hugo had lived and written. But, being French, the professor had a natural prejudice in favor of hearing his language pronounced correctly. In spite of all their knowledge and interest, most of the students in this course had abominable accents; it seemed to be a rule among American school teachers. I had learned French so young that all the laziness in the world could never rob me of a fairly good pronunciation. Consequently, when I had occasion to read some of Victor Hugo's detested verses aloud, the professor would lean back in his chair with satisfaction. This, combined with a prudent silence when the discussions were out of my depth, gave the good man the idea that I really knew something of the subject, and I finished the course with an unjustifiably handsome record.

But something important happened to me during the summer of 1919, thanks chiefly to the Hugo poems. I had been realizing with increasing clarity, week after week, the superficial character of my own mind. I was nineteen, and I knew nothing. The fact that I could speak a sort of French had nothing to do with me; what credit there might be for that should have gone to the devout and kindly Irish priest who had tutored me in it for years. Of the actual meaning of French literature I knew far less than the scrubbiest high-school teacher from Iowa. The struggles of men's minds—whether of contemporary minds or of those like Chateaubriand's and Hugo's, long gone to dust—meant nothing to me at all. I had existed without realizing that it seriously mattered to anybody what men believed, or under what form of gov-

ernment, in what structure of society, they lived. The summer's study gave me no love for the poetry of Victor Hugo: on the contrary, the mere thought of *La Légende des Siècles* made me feel slightly uneasy for years to come. But I did derive from it some idea of what the process of literature could be—some hint of the stormy sincerity in which minds like Hugo's sought for the truth. The suggestion, however dim, was sufficient reward for the boredom of reading what then seemed to me an intolerable quantity of pompous, overstuffed verse.

My ideas of what I might get out of the University thereafter submitted to rearrangement. Words could no longer suffice: I understood Hugo's words well enough, the upholstery of his mind, but it was the mind itself that escaped me. If a mind of Hugo's quality was incomprehensible, how could I expect to know anything about the rarer minds that did (even then) seem to me most worth the effort of comprehension: Molière, Racine, Shakespeare? And, even in a world I found tiresome beyond my powers of resistance, the world of the "Victorian Prose Writers," what could I hope to understand by words alone? It was clear, after the Hugo experience, that literature involved something at once more complex and more ordinary, more closely related to the whole life of mankind, than the science of stringing words together in desirable sequences, however fascinating the contemplation of such patterns might seem to a bookish and word-conscious nature.

Nothing could be learned about literature by studying literature: that was what it came to. Courses in literature seldom took on the vitality of that special Hugo course with its special participants. In general, they were either arranged to suit average students with no interest in the subject, or specialists with an interest so minute that it was (in my view) equivalent to no interest at all. I had no desire to count the feminine endings in the lines of the *Canterbury Tales*. What I wanted to know—in so far as I really wanted to know anything about them—was why the *Canterbury Tales* were written; what mysterious springs existed in the mind and heart of a man named Geoffrey Chaucer to bring forth such a particular stream of articulated language; what the world was like for which he wrote, in which he lived, and what was his particular struggle with it. Professors did sometimes try to convey this sort of information; but it was obvious that they had obtained it elsewhere and were passing it on in capsule form. Where had they obtained it?

History, perhaps, was the answer; philosophy might be part of it.

That autumn, when the regular academic year began, I switched from the faculties of English literature and Romance languages to those of history and philosophy. And perhaps if this had been the arrangement two years before I might not have wasted quite so much time.

I am not suggesting that I became a model of industry and scholarship promptly at nine o'clock on the morning of registration day in October, 1919. I still frittered away a good three quarters or four fifths of my time, still registered for an occasional course of lectures that could be treated cavalierly as a "snap" (History of Venetian Art, for instance). But at least I was not behaving altogether as if the University were a country club. Both in history and in philosophy I learned something—not much, but something. There was a course in Plato that conveyed meaning to me; another, on the German idealists, I found as exciting as a romantic novel. But perhaps the most interesting of all—the one to be recalled most often in subsequent life—was a term of lectures and reading on the Decline of the Ottoman Empire.

This—an "advanced," and therefore a rather small, class—was in charge of an inspired teacher. I never knew what made the difference between a good and a bad teacher, but I did know that Ferdinand Schevill was a superlatively good one. He was a German, short and rather formidable in appearance, with eyeglasses and a neatly trimmed Vandyke beard. His university was Heidelberg or Bonn, I believe, and yet he had none of that pedantry which is supposed to be the vice of German scholarship. When he led us through the immense and complicated story of the decay that fell upon Suleiman's empire after the seventeenth century he did not try to treat it microscopically as an isolated phenomenon. He talked about the Arabs, the Turks, the Balkan peoples, as if they were alive; and they soon began to come to life for me. Schevill's system was to allow his students to read at will through the whole literature of the subject, and therefrom to choose, halfway through the course, a particular aspect for further reading and a final paper. I began to read everything I could find about the Asiatic empire of the Turks. Almost from the first day that side of the Bosphorus seemed to me of greater interest than this. I extended my researches to the files of newspapers and magazines, and when it came time to choose, I took for my term paper the history of the Wahabite movement.

An odder choice for a nineteen-year-old undergraduate at the University of Chicago would be hard to imagine. Ibn es-Sa'ud was then almost unknown to the Western world, and the literature on the Wahabi was scarce indeed. I read everything I could find in English, French, or German, and performed the best piece of honest work I had ever done. For a few weeks, while I was reading in the library, I nearly persuaded myself that I was living in Arabia, and sometimes the vast cloaks and camel turbans of the Bedawin seemed more real than the swishing skirts of the co-eds going by. Later on I obtained permission to go down into the stacks of that huge library—steel stacks with glass

floors running among them, layer upon layer. The world's knowledge lay there like a sunken continent swimming in subaqueous light, and through its fields I ranged more or less at will. My interest in Islam, such as it was, began that year, and what I learned in Schevill's course was never wholly forgotten. If other teachers had been like him, other subjects as vivid to me as the disintegration of Turkey became, I might have learned more in my long sojourn under the sham-Gothic towers.

But the social system of the undergraduate world in which I lived was the villain of the piece. No teacher could have compelled full attention from a mind preoccupied with elaborate details of social relationship. The University of Chicago, one of the largest and richest institutions of learning in the world, was partly inhabited by a couple of thousand young nincompoops whose ambition in life was to get into the right fraternity or club, go to the right parties, and get elected to something or other. The frivolous two thousand—the undergraduate body, the "campus"—may have been a minority, for the University contained a great many solitary workers in both the undergraduate and graduate fields; but the minority thought itself a majority, thought itself, in fact, the whole of the University. And it was to the frivolous two thousand that I belonged.

Chicago was by no means the worst American university in this respect—it was supposed, on the contrary, to be one of the best; but even at Chicago "campus activities" were the most serious part of life. Freshmen chose, on the advice of their elders, which of these "activities" to pursue throughout the four years. Some "went out for the *Maroon*" (i.e., worked for the college's daily newspaper), some "for the team" (i.e., football), some for other organized athletics, and some for "class politics." Rare and wonderful freshmen "went out for" everything at once.

There were hierarchies in the *Daily Maroon*, in the Dramatic Club, which made productions every two or three months, and in the Blackfriars. This last was an association of undergraduates interested in producing an operetta (original, more or less) in the spring of every year with men in all the parts. Freshmen were graduated through the successive steps in all these organizations until the survivors, by natural selection and incredibly hard work, stood out in their senior year, immortal: the editor of the *Maroon*, the president of the Dramatic Club, the abbot (and other officials) of Blackfriars. Football and track athletics had their four-year plans as well, but they were not my line of country, and I knew little about them.

Organized "activities," as occupation for the energies of youth, could have done no harm if they had not been supplemented, and to some



extent even controlled, by a social life of singular ferocity. The women undergraduates had a number of clubs to which all the "nice" girls were supposed to belong. Four or five of these clubs were "good" and the rest "bad." Their goodness and badness were absolute, past, present and future, and could not be called into question. They had no houses or rooms of their own, but they maintained a rigid solidarity and succeeded in imposing upon the undergraduate society a tone of intricate, overweening snobbery.

The men were grouped in Greek-letter fraternities with houses for residence. Half a dozen of these were "good" and the rest "bad"; but their goodness and badness were not quite so irremediable as the similar qualifications among the women's clubs. The fraternities were national organizations, with chapters in most of the American universities, and it was well known that the same fraternity might be "good" at the University of California and "bad" at Yale. The salutary effect of this consideration was supported by the fact that the men did not seem to have the same high degree of social cruelty as the women. Men often joined a fraternity because their brothers or fathers had belonged to it, because they had friends in it, because they liked some one person in it, or even because its house or its food or its heating system appealed to them. Such homely, sensible reasons weighed little with the women. All of them, true to the great tradition of American womanhood, took the very "best" club to which they could possibly be elected, and the logic of their behavior kept their club system rigid throughout my four years at the University.

My experience with the fraternity system was a weird one. It was in no way typical, but it exhibited some of the cannibalistic character of the institution and the intensity with which its importance was felt among the undergraduates. I entered the University ignorant of even the names of the Greek-letter societies. On my first or second day I was asked to lunch at a fraternity house and went. On the next day I discovered that that godlike creature, the editor of the *Maroon*, was a member of this very fraternity. When, on about the fourth day, I was asked to pledge myself to join it, I accepted at once.

Followed what has since appeared to be a grand tragicomic episode. I moved into the fraternity house, where lived the friends, ready-made, among whom I was supposed to pass four years. My roommate was Alan Le May, a dour, dark and silent freshman with a sharp intelligence. He afterwards took to making vast sums of money by writing about the wild and woolly West, but at the time he was more concerned with such effete Eastern matters as French composition and English literature. There were a number of other brothers-in-the-bond

who loomed particularly large. Above them all, in a kind of hazy splendor like that which crowns a high mountain in the sun, there dwelt the supreme god, A. B., the editor of the *Maroon*. He was kind to me, suggested books to read, talked to me about the scraps of verse I used to write. I never saw anybody afterwards who possessed quite his Olympian quality, and two or three kings, with a pope and a president thrown in, could not possibly have awed me so much in later days as he awed me then. In all, I was happy in that life; but it was not prolonged.

On the day of our initiation into the fraternity, three months after the taking of the pledge, a girl asked me to cut my classes and take a long walk with her. She was a pretty girl, a freshman, whom I had met in the office of the *Daily Maroon* and with whom I was conducting a shy and tentative flirtation. It was bitter cold that day; she was wrapped in furs, and I decidedly was not; but we walked for many hours through the snowy streets, down to Jackson Park with its trees hung in ice, and out to the wintry lake. After we had been chattering about ordinary things for ten or fifteen minutes she suddenly opened up on me.

"I've been talking to various people around the *Maroon* about you," she said. "We all think you're a pretty good freshman. You might amount to something if you had any sense. I don't think you know what you're doing. I realize it's none of my business, but I've made up my mind to talk to you about it before it's too late."

This meant nothing to me, and I said so.

"Oh, don't pretend that you don't understand," she said. "It's that damned fraternity. You can't possibly belong to it and make anything at all out of your college life. You'll be miserable in another year, when you know where you are. No girl will go out with you—no nice girl, that is. And you're barred from everything that makes college life what it is. Of course, I know you're not Jewish, but everybody doesn't realize that, and I think it's a terrible shame."

In my entire life I had never heard a more surprising series of statements.

"But what are you talking about, anyway?" I asked. "Why on earth should anybody think I was Jewish?"

"Because you belong to a Jewish fraternity," she said.

Ensued a ludicrous, painful, silly and melancholy conversation. In the course of it I made acquaintance with (a) the social system of the University of Chicago; (b) the Jewish problem; (c) the way of the world; (d) my own colossal ignorance. Incredible though it seemed afterwards, I had never known a Jew in my life and had no idea that

there were so many of them growing there under my eyes. I had only the romantic and provincial notions about Jews: thought of them as bearded old gentlemen with magic powers and vast stores of gold. Except for Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*, I had never made the acquaintance of a young Jew even in literature. I suppose I must have thought they had sprung full grown into the Middle Ages and thence vanished into the oblivion of eastern Europe. At any rate, the fact was that I had never thought of the Jews as a possibility in the here and now: my contemporaries in America, in Chicago. To Lucy, my pretty little girl-friend—a wise little girl indeed, striding along in her muskrat coat—I must have seemed an imbecile. At first she refused to believe that this was new to me.

"You're sixteen years old," she scolded. "You've got a fair amount of brains. My God, boy, do you mean to tell me you don't know a Jew when you see one? Look at them, idiot, look at them. They have noses, hair, eyes, features, mouths, all different from anybody else. Can you honestly tell me you didn't know that — was a Jew?"

And then the melancholy catalogue began. One by one we ran through the list of every member of my fraternity. They were all, it seemed, Jews.<sup>1</sup> So were half the freshmen, male and female, on the *Daily Maroon*. The last name, the one I dreaded to pronounce, was that of the godlike senior, the editor of the *Maroon*. And he too, as Lucy proved by a merciless analysis of his name and appearance, was certainly Jewish.

After this I walked along for a long time in silence. Lucy kept on talking, but I scarcely heard what she said. I was trying to realize that I had been living for nearly three months in a houseful of Jews and had never known it. I was shocked, humiliated, and angry, not because my fraternity brothers were Jewish, but because I had not known about it. The shock would have been the same if they had all turned out to be Swedenborgians, or Spaniards, or vegetarians, or believers in the transmigration of souls. It made them a special caste, a marked and invariable species, to which I could not possibly belong. To have failed to recognize a quality so singular was also a proof of abysmal ignorance on my part. I was naïf and provincial, of course, but I had never realized to what a degree. In the end I had recourse to the expedient we all come to at one time or another—I refused to believe the truth.

"Well, Lucy," I said combatively, "I don't believe a single thing you say, but let's just suppose for a minute that it's true. Then what? What's

<sup>1</sup> They weren't, but this was a detail I did not know for years. The undergraduate body called it a "Jewish fraternity" because it contained Jews; and among the supposed Jews were a good many Gentiles.

the difference? What possible harm can it do me to belong to a Jewish fraternity?"

She began a recital that horrified me. It horrified me more afterwards, as I came to know that the state of affairs described was by no means peculiar to the University of Chicago or to university life. The Jews, it seemed, could not possibly go to the "nice" parties in college. They could not be elected to any class office, or to office in any club, or to any fraternity except the two they had themselves organized; they could not dance with whom they pleased or go out with the girls they wanted to go out with; they could not even walk across the quadrangles with a "nice" girl if she could possibly escape. And so on. The picture was painted with violence, but it was true, as I was to learn before long. Hitler himself could not have invented a more savage and degrading system of anti-Semitism than that worked out by those little monsters, the undergraduates. The system had been operating all around me from the day I entered college, and I had never seen it. As Lucy explained, my position was peculiar. I was a non-Jewish freshman pledged to a Jewish fraternity. My own brothers-in-the-bond would naturally not explain these things to me, said she, and nobody else had the courage to do so.

It took another period of painful argument to convince me that such prejudices and restrictions existed. Having, finally, accepted them as true on Lucy's testimony, I then asked why they should apply to me.

"After all," I argued, "I've got the map of Ireland in my face. Not to speak of my name. How on earth could anybody think I was Jewish?"

"It doesn't make any difference," she said. "You belong to a Jewish fraternity. That's enough. Lots of Jews take Irish names, and lots of Jews don't look especially Jewish. You'll be marked as a Jew, all right, if you go on into the fraternity. Take my word for it: I know."

After hours of explaining, exhorting and laying down the law, Lucy brought forth the suggestion to which all this had been a preparation. It was that I should break my pledge to the fraternity, spend two or three months living in a "dormitory" (i.e., a college hall), and then, in the spring, join one of the better Gentile fraternities.

I repudiated the notion with vehemence. What? Leave the place I liked best in the whole University? Abandon my friends? Desert the roommate who was the only person I knew foolish enough, and amiable enough, to sit up arguing with me until two or three in the morning? Above all, forsake the precincts hallowed by the presence of that saint, that prince of the world, the editor of the *Maroon*? Impossible!

And on that note the afternoon ended. We had walked from early afternoon until dark; we had plowed through snow and shivered on

the icy lake front; I had been more thoroughly upset than ever before in my seventeen years. Lucy entered the gates of Foster Hall without knowing whether her effort had been in vain or not, and I went on home to the fraternity house, which seemed to have been invested, between lunch and dinner, with mystery.

It is difficult to make out just what my idea of a Jew was. It seems probable that the word had no significance at all, except the dubious significance given it in the romances I had spent my childhood reading. But it must have set up some kind of reverberation in my mind, because all my friends began to seem a little mysterious to me from the moment I thought they were Jewish. The ideas that Jews are a terrifying people, that they deal in dark magic, that they belong to an especially gifted and especially tragic race, are scattered so widely through all the literature of Christian Europe that we take them in unconsciously, more or less as we absorb air and moisture, without troubling to notice the process. Unconscious anti-Semitism was here, as in larger issues, what made the problem so extraordinarily difficult. I was not knowingly anti-Jewish; I had never knowingly spoken to a Jew or thought about the Jewish problem; and yet the accumulated prejudices of two thousand years had so subtly and insensibly poisoned my mind that it came as a shock to hear that my particular friends, the most admired of my acquaintances, were Jews.

Such shocks are absorbed by time. Along with other oddments of superstition, the origins of which we cannot always trace, there disappears the notion that the Jews are a sinister race, gifted in the black arts or banded together in sorcery; we learn that when they are treated like anybody else they do not greatly differ from anybody else. But to dispel these ancestral fancies, clinging like vague vapors in the mind, we require the light and air of experience. And it was precisely experience that was most conspicuously lacking in the equipment of the freshman who plowed through the snow that night, going home, for the first time in his life, with a Problem.

"Lemmy!" I said, coming into my room, "I've got to talk to you. Do you think that A. B. is Jewish?"

"Of course," he said. "What's the matter?"

I told him as much as I could of the afternoon's discoveries, but there was little time. The dinner bell was ringing, and freshmen could not be late.

"It's all true enough," he said. "I've known it all the time. Haven't you?"

His glum face was glummer than ever; he frowned intently, scratched his close-cropped black head.

"After dinner," he said, "we can lock the door and talk it out. Let's eat."

Lemmy completed the education Lucy had begun. After dinner, a nervous meal under the circumstances, we made for our room at once to "study." With the door locked we sat there and talked in the quiet voices of conspirators. He had learned, from his father probably, a great deal about the world we lived in.

Our fraternity, he told me, had been founded to include (and perhaps to reconcile) Jews and non-Jews; it had only succeeded in getting itself labeled as wholly Jewish; and a national convention the year before had restricted its membership in future to Gentiles. (I remember my feeling of relief when I learned that he too was a Gentile; I was never to be sure whether anybody else in the house was or not.)

Like Lucy a few hours earlier, Lemmy found my ignorance hard to believe. He said, patiently enough, that everybody knew these things; that the difference between Jews and Gentiles was as obvious as that between men and women, and that it would never occur to anybody to state it. He further corroborated everything Lucy had told me about the opprobrium, the ridicule, the complicated varieties of discrimination and prejudice, to which any Gentile who belonged to a Jewish fraternity would have to submit throughout four years in college. He had known all this when he was pledged, he said; and he had still taken the pledge because (in his humility) he supposed the "bid" to join a fraternity to be a rare thing, and a Jewish fraternity to be better than none. He agreed that no house could be pleasanter than ours, no friends more satisfactory; but he was convinced that remaining in the fraternity meant accepting a kind of permanent ostracism from the life of the Gentile part of the undergraduate body.

We agreed, in a high state of hysterical agitation, to do "something." But that "something" could not be long delayed. The informal initiation into the fraternity would take place in an hour, and the following day we were to take the solemn, irrevocable oaths of the formal initiation. We were still in turmoil when a solemn knock on our door summoned us to the ordeal.

"Informal initiation" into a fraternity was supposed to be a test for the courage or endurance of the freshman candidate for membership. The candidate was stripped naked and led, blindfolded, into a room where the elders of the fraternity exercised their strength and wits in an attempt to try his nerve. Actually no candidate, however poltroonishly he behaved during the tests, was ever refused admission to the brotherhood, and the "informal initiation" was therefore merely an excuse for some rather rudimentary fun. The ordeal by fire, the ordeal

by water, and a dozen other curious relics of savagery were brought into play, ostensibly to prove that a boy of sixteen or seventeen was made of the right stuff to be a brother in the bond.

I went into the initiation in a state of nerves that might have made the simplest trial difficult for me. Fortunately it worked the opposite way. No matter what the brothers had done I doubt if I should have cried out or betrayed my mortal terror. The only thing I can remember saying is a sudden and involuntary "What's that?" when the brand of the fraternity's initial letter was put on my arm and I felt the searing of the flesh. That brand remained ever afterwards, faint but quite clear, to remind me of the fantastic episode of which it was a part.

My initiation was short and easy. In five minutes it was all over and I heard A. B.'s kindly voice saying, "All right, Jim, you can go back to your room." Trembling with relief, I raced down the corridor to my own place and got into my clothes. Lemmy was already there, dressing. The house was quiet with our door closed, but occasionally the loud laughter of the upper classmen came through from the continuing initiation. Lemmy sat on the edge of the bed and looked glum.

"We can pack a bag," he said, "and go to Aurora after everybody is asleep. We'll have to jump out the window. But that is only if you've made up your mind. You've got to make up your mind. If you want to do it, I'll stick."

We agreed on the plan of escape. We both felt that it would be impossible to face the assembled brethren, headed by A. B., and tell them our decision. They could easily overwhelm us with arguments; and tomorrow, after the formal oaths of allegiance, it would be too late.

It was most unpleasant, after this, to receive congratulations on having passed through the horseplay initiation "successfully." I suppose we both felt like the lowest of traitors; I know I did. But the congratulations were over in half an hour; the whole house went to sleep; at some time after midnight, with the precautions and terrors of an elopement, we dropped a bag out the window and jumped after it. From the narrow garden side of the house it was a quick scramble to the street, to a taxicab, to the train. We arrived in the middle of the night at the house of Lemmy's astonished parents in Aurora and remained there for the next two days. It was Lemmy who wrote to the fraternity to explain what we had done.

On the following afternoon A. B. arrived to talk to us. In that painful interview, all the arguments were brought forth in their unrelieved ugliness. Lemmy and A. B. did most of the talking. In the end A. B. said that since our decision was not to be changed, he would accept it, and that it would make no difference to either of us on the *Daily*

*Maroon*. In a state of suicidal gloom, all three of us then returned on the afternoon train to Chicago and to the University.

A. B. seemed to me, then and afterwards, the most admirable person I knew in Chicago. He could not have been more than twenty, but he was invested (in my eyes at least) with the wisdom of the ages. He had apparently founded great hopes for the fraternity on both of us, and our desertion was a blow to him; but he had a sense of justice. He could see that there was something to be said on our side, and having accepted the monstrous situation he made the best of it. During the rest of the year A. B. seemed to be little changed, and in the spring, when the freshmen were weeded out for the next step in the *Daily Maroon's* hierarchy, it was A. B. who made me night editor for the following year. I never took the job; my exploits in the democratic army, followed by three months out of college, kept me from going on in the scheme that was to lead (in A. B.'s plan) to the editorship-in-chief. But anybody who knows the fierce antagonisms and merciless injustice of the fraternity system can see that in treating a renegade so fairly A. B. was showing a character rare among undergraduates. There may have been other fraternity men with enough maturity of mind to rise above the system, but I never knew one.

The next three months were, for Lemmy and me, a taste of thoroughgoing ostracism from the normal "campus." In the fraternity system the offense of "pledge stealing" (i.e., inducing a freshman pledged to one fraternity to break his pledge in order to join another) was rigidly condemned. Consequently nobody in any other fraternity would talk to us. The offense of "pledge breaking" was regarded as equally heinous by our former brothers in the bond, and not one of them except A. B. ever spoke to us again. It was a curious and painful experience to pass them on the campus, as we did a dozen times every morning. After a few experiences we learned to look the other way, but the effort was not pleasant. We were, for the winter term, "barbs" (i.e., "barbarians," since "all who are not Greeks are barbarians"). But we were in a far worse position than other "barbs," because they, for the most part, cared nothing about the ordinary undergraduates, led their own lives, and had their own friends. We had none.

"Barbarians" included most of the Jewish students, who were a majority of the total enrolled; the "grinds" and "Christers" among the Christian students; and a few notably "queer" ones who were too violently unlike the average to be desirable recruits to the campus life. Glenway Wescott, descending upon the University from a Wisconsin farm, frightened most of his classmates with his waving yellow hair and his floating black cape and his weirdly literary manner of speech. Elizabeth



Roberts, austere and diligent, serious with a terrifying concentration, never showed the slightest interest in the frivolities of the ordinary undergraduates. These and other eccentrics came to be almost my only acquaintances in the University during that term of ostracism from the gaieties of the campus. They were (God save us all!) the "Poetry Club."

The Poetry Club had been formed early in the winter of my freshman year by professional advocates of an intellectual life for undergraduates. It had started as a prize competition for student poetry. The prize was the sum of \$25. I had sent in two bits of verse, neither of them much good, and had thereafter concealed my temerity from everybody, even from A. B. The prize was awarded to a senior whose name I forget, a medical student; but it was explained in the *Daily Maroon* that this had required two ballots, since on the first it was found that three undergraduates had tied for first place. The three were the aforesaid medical student, Glenway Wescott, and myself. The medical student got the \$25 and we got the Poetry Club.

We used to meet solemnly in little padded drawing rooms in Ida Noyes Hall and discuss the productions of our colleagues. Glenway always had a sheaf of immortal poetry somewhere about him, which he was ready to read out at the drop of a hat. His poetry was exceedingly "modern," without rhyme or meter or capital letters or punctuation, and very often (to my untutored ear) without sense either. But I was conscious enough of my shortcomings to realize that this was probably my fault, not his; and I sat through many a long reading of which I could make neither head nor tail. His modern verse was eclipsed in modernity and incomprehensibility by that of a senior who was president of the Poetry Club. Indeed, the whole club was excessively modern, and it would have taken more courage than I possessed to affront its contemporary ears with such a deplorable throwback as a sonnet. And since, at that time, I was writing sonnets by the dozen, my contribution to the poetic feast was nil.

We used to enjoy, in our first year, a flattering amount of attention from literary personages not in the University. We were thought, for some reason, to be "promising," and consequently Miss Harriet Monroe, Mr. Carl Sandburg, and other notables from the Chicago *cénacle*, condescended to visit us and read us their own verse. Thus I formed the belief that all poets loved reading aloud and traveled about with reams of unpublished poetry in their pockets.

The solemnity of our gatherings at the Poetry Club would have stunned T. S. Eliot himself. It was sometimes difficult for me to keep from snickering, particularly when the young poets were carried away by the excitement of reading their own productions. More than once

the president had to reprove me for undue levity in comment. No doubt the whole thing was funny, but not perhaps so uproariously funny as it seemed to me at seventeen. The whole fraternity-and-campus-collegiate side of me crinkled with hostile, unreasoning laughter at the sight of Glenway declaiming his impassioned verses, his yellow mane thrown back and his childish face uplifted. His later development into a sincere and sensitive artist would have seemed incredible to me then, if anybody had been so rash as to predict it.

The barbarians, the grinds, and the highbrows learned much more than I did at the University. Scornful of the "campus life" that preoccupied the rest of us, they grew into intellectual maturity more rapidly than their fellows, and their interest in general ideas was aroused before most of us knew what an idea was. They knew nothing of the fraternities or clubs, went to no "parties," and ignored the existence of football. It might have been a good thing if I had remained one of them. But I was afflicted by a dichotomy that has never left me: I could not avoid trying to make the best of two worlds. The term of ostracism to which Lemmy and I had been submitted by interfraternity rules came to an end in the spring, and I soon forgot all about the Poetry Club in the excitement of readmission to the other, the average, world of the undergraduates.

No freshman who had broken his pledge to one fraternity could be "rushed" for another for three months. But when the period of suspension ended, at Easter, a change came over the complexion of things. People who had avoided me like the plague all through the winter suddenly started asking me to lunch. In two or three weeks after the ending of the ban I had been pledged again to another fraternity—this time to a Gentile one, which I believe had been exceedingly "good" and was afterwards "good" again. At the precise moment of my admission it was not one of the most brilliant of the undergraduate houses, but it did contain two or three freshmen who were to be among my best and most lasting friends in Chicago. Lemmy—who was off to the wars that summer—joined me in it the following year.

But I was never what is called a "good fraternity man." After the bizarre introduction I had had to the system, it was impossible for me to take it with the literal seriousness it required of its adherents. The adolescent sentimentality that was supposed to be lavished upon the fraternity and the brothers in the bond had been pretty well burned out by my unorthodox experience. It was hard to get up enthusiasm for songs, rituals, and ceremonies when I knew they were being gone through in a couple of dozen other fraternity houses at the same time and by almost exactly the same people. Uniformity—the true uniform-

ity of the good American undergraduate, who talked the same language and wore the same clothes and did exactly the same things as every other undergraduate—was not really accessible to me. It fascinated me for a long time, and I attempted for two years to achieve it; but the effort was useless and soon began to appear uninteresting as well. After about a year in the house (the new house) I moved away from it, to a college hall, and for the rest of my time in the University I lived alone, like a “barb,” with the single difference that I did have a fraternity to go to when I pleased. The brothers did not like this attitude and said so more than once, but by the time I had been two years in the college I knew that the heavens would not fall if I went my own way, and their protests did not disturb me.

Christmas of 1920 was my last in the University. My mother was very ill; early in January, 1921, she died. The disaster would probably have made college life unbearable in any case, but there was also the question of money. There had been little enough before; there was none now. January passed in unrelieved gloom. I returned to Chicago lonely and helpless. There was a job for me (thanks to a friend) as a reporter on the Chicago *Daily News*, but I must have been phenomenally stupid at it, for I lasted only two or three weeks. When I received my *cong  * I did, almost without thinking, something that had probably been floating about in the undergrowth of my mind for weeks or months. I walked out of the *Daily News* office, down to the old Dearborn Street station, and onto a train for New York—without luggage and with very little money. For hour after hour I sat at a train window and stared out through tears and dirt. It was a fairly typical departure, to be worked out during the next ten years into a system of going away. *Fuir, l  -bas fuir*, could serve as a kind of epigraph for my youth, for it was spent in flight.

I was not to see Chicago again except on two short visits years later, in a world altogether different from that of the University. Those brief visits were sufficient to show me, in retrospect, how narrow my experience had been. For example, there were in Chicago some of the finest collections of modern pictures in the world: I never saw one of them while I was in the University. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra had a long season of concerts and was one of the best ensembles to be found in the United States: but the only concerts I heard in college were a few of the few (four or five a year) given in the University chapel. There were buildings, clubs, interiors, examples of modern art and architecture, and a thousand varieties of life to be seen in the lusty, sprawling, vulgar and vigorous town: I had seen only one. For the whole of my three years and a half beside Lake Michigan I was walled up in a world self-

contained, self-governing and self-sufficient, the world of the college undergraduates. Ten years later I could not even remember my way about Chicago, and had to walk all the way to the lake front every time I wanted to distinguish north from south. So much for the people who believed that a university could not lead its own life in a great city! Youth, at least my variety of ignorant youth, built its own walls very high, and no city was powerful enough to batter them down.

Within those walls what, after all, had I learned? What did I take away from the pseudo-Gothic sanctuary of my pseudo-education? Not much. I had some vague idea of history and philosophy, a bowing acquaintance with English and French literature. I had learned a good deal about snobbery, cruelty, prejudice, injustice and stupidity. I had acquired half a dozen friends—perhaps. I had learned how to dance the fox trot.

It is stupefying to remember how little else I carried from Chicago with me. I spent the next ten years learning the course of events in the world from 1917 to 1921, approaching them as one approaches the course of events in the Renaissance or the Middle Ages. I was a freshman when the Bolshevik Revolution took place, and I am certain that I did not even read the accounts of it that appeared in the Chicago newspapers. The Treaty of Versailles, the defeat and collapse of Woodrow Wilson, the crash of monarchies all through Europe, the revolution in Turkey and the whole bestirring of assorted nationalisms, Wilson's legacy to the world, were duly recorded in history while I went to class dances and wrote songs for Blackfriars. The bourgeois system insulated all its children as much as possible from a knowledge of the processes of human development, and in my case it succeeded admirably in its purpose. Few Hottentots or South Sea Islanders could be less prepared for life in the great world than I was at twenty-one. As I sat in that filthy day coach on the train to New York (filthy with a concentrated filth known only to American day coaches) I was the least respectable of passengers: my ticket went one way only, and I had no baggage of any kind.

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# University Days

JAMES THURBER (1894- )

James Thurber was born in Columbus, Ohio and there spent his boyhood. In 1917 he dropped out of the Senior class at Ohio State University to serve the country as a code clerk, first in Washington and then in the Paris Embassy. After the war he entered newspaper work, leaving it in 1927 upon his appointment to the staff of the *New Yorker*. Two years later, in collaboration with a fellow-editor, E. B. White, he brought out his first book, *Is Sex Necessary?* The thesis that sex, "although less than fifty years old, has upset the whole Western World" was suitably confused by a series of unearthly decorations of men and women as amorphous as amoebas. These, so the story goes, White had salvaged from floor and wastebasket whither the artist had swished them. They were the memo-pad projections of James Thurber's subconscious. He had come into his own as an author-illustrator.

In spite of such convincing evidence as Thurber's recent picture-parable, *The Last Flower* (1939), there are still many misguided people who maintain that Thurber cannot draw. Few, however, dare deny that he can write. America is full of funny-men who write; Thurber, although he has scorned the label, is one of her rare humorists. Since *Is Sex Necessary?* he has exploited the same mad vein of parody in a series of books, gathered largely from his *New Yorker* contributions. In *The Owl in the Attic* (1931) he mocked the newspaper pet-department and the handbook of English usage. In *Let Your Mind Alone!* (1937) he ridiculed the popular psychologists. In *The Middle-Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1935) and *Fables for Our Time* (1940) he aimed his arrows in all directions, his mood varying from colossally pointless nonsense to sharply pointed satire. Recently Thurber and an old college friend, Elliot Nugent, put the eternal war between men and women into a farce, seasoned it with a dash of satire on academic dictatorship, and turned up with a Broadway hit, *The Male Animal* (1940).

But the uniqueness of Thurber's humor does not lie in his ridicule of the people around him. It lies rather in a peculiar gift for distilling comedy from his own most melancholy misadventures, for depicting with crystal clarity the muddle of his own inner chaos. This talent, displayed here and there throughout his fugitive essays, is at its best in his autobiography.

*My Life and Hard Times* (1933), in which "University Days" is Chapter IX, does not conform to any tested recipe for autobiography.

In fact its author would thank the reader not to associate him with the legion of autobiographers—journalists, doctors, and college professors—which descended upon the non-fiction ranks in the thirties. To read its preface and two fugitive pieces entitled “The Hiding Generation” and “The Letters of James Thurber” is to know where Thurber chooses to rate himself. His memory, we are told, tosses up the mere flotsam and jetsam of the past—the waitress in the Post Café in Washington whose name was Mrs. Rabbit, or the time when his luggage was lost in transatlantic passage and a batch of candy bars, months a-melting, covered all his worldly goods with chocolate lava. He is suspicious of the *bona fide* autobiographer who, apparently aided by a complete carbon-copy file of his own chatty letters to others, can reconstruct the jig-saw puzzle of his life and times down to the final piece. Thurber insists that he himself could not, if he would, follow the orderly chronology of a standard life or paint the crowded picture of a time. His time is instead “his own personal time, circumscribed by the short boundaries of his pain and his embarrassment, in which what happened to his digestion, the rear axle of his car, and the confused flow of his relationships with six or eight persons and two or three buildings is of greater importance than what goes on in the nation or in the universe.”

If Thurber's autobiography must be pigeon-holed, it belongs beside such classics as Clarence Day's *Life with Father* and Ruth McKenney's *My Sister Eileen*. Like them it is a saga of family lunacy. Like them it is a collection of short sketches, each of which is an independent work of art. Gathered together in a loose chronological order, the pieces of *My Life and Hard Times* present the hilarious progress of the boy Thurber groping into confused young manhood. The time is the indeterminate interval between the night the bed fell on father and the day when the whistles screeched the end of World War I. Uncle Zenas is dead of the chestnut blight before the story opens, but “the car we had to push,” “the dog that bit people,” and “the day the dam broke” all belong to that period of Columbus history. It is vain to ask if Professor Bassum and Bolenciewicz ever actually lived. Any bewildered undergraduate can see that they are real.

I PASSED ALL THE OTHER COURSES that I took at my university, but I could never pass botany. This was because all botany students had to spend several hours a week in a laboratory looking through a microscope at plant cells, and I could never see through a microscope. I never once saw a cell through a microscope. This used to enrage my instructor. He would wander around the laboratory pleased with the progress all the students were making in drawing the involved and, so I am told,

From *My Life and Hard Times*, by James Thurber. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Brothers, publishers.

interesting structure of flower cells, until he came to me. I would just be standing there. "I can't see anything," I would say. He would begin patiently enough, explaining how anybody can see through a microscope, but he would always end up in a fury, claiming that I could *too* see though a microscope but just pretended that I couldn't. "It takes away from the beauty of flowers anyway," I used to tell him. "We are not concerned with beauty in this course," he would say. "We are concerned solely with what I may call the *mechanics* of flars." "Well," I'd say, "I can't see anything." "Try it just once again," he'd say, and I would put my eye to the microscope and see nothing at all, except now and again, a nebulous milky substance—a phenomenon of maladjustment. You were supposed to see a vivid, restless clockwork of sharply defined plant cells. "I see what looks like a lot of milk," I would tell him. This, he claimed, was the result of my not having adjusted the microscope properly; so he would readjust it for me, or rather, for himself. And I would look again and see milk.

I finally took a deferred pass, as they called it, and waited a year and tried again. (You had to pass one of the biological sciences or you couldn't graduate.) The professor had come back from vacation brown as a berry, bright-eyed, and eager to explain cell-structure again to his classes. "Well," he said to me, cheerily, when we met in the first laboratory hour of the semester, "we're going to see cells this time, aren't we?" "Yes, sir," I said. Students to right of me and to left of me and in front of me were seeing cells; what's more, they were quietly drawing pictures of them in their notebooks. Of course, I didn't see anything.

"We'll try it," the professor said to me, grimly, "with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. As God is my witness, I'll arrange this glass so that you see cells through it or I'll give up teaching. In twenty-two years of botany, I—" He cut off abruptly for he was beginning to quiver all over, like Lionel Barrymore, and he genuinely wished to hold onto his temper; his scenes with me had taken a great deal out of him.

So we tried it with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. With only one of them did I see anything but blackness or the familiar lacteal opacity, and that time I saw, to my pleasure and amazement, a variegated constellation of flecks, specks, and dots. These I hastily drew. The instructor, noting my activity, came back from an adjoining desk, a smile on his lips and his eyebrows high in hope. He looked at my cell drawing. "What's that?" he demanded, with a hint of a squeal in his voice. "That's what I saw," I said. "You didn't, you didn't, you *didn't*!" he screamed, losing control of his temper instantly, and he bent over and squinted into the microscope. His head

snapped up. "That's your eye!" he shouted. "You've fixed the lens so that it reflects! You've drawn your eye!"

Another course that I didn't like, but somehow managed to pass, was economics. I went to that class straight from the botany class, which didn't help me any in understanding either subject. I used to get them mixed up. But not as mixed up as another student in my economics class who came there direct from a physics laboratory. He was a tackle on the football team, named Bolenciecwcwz. At that time Ohio State University had one of the best football teams in the country, and Bolenciecwcwz was one of its outstanding stars. In order to be eligible to play it was necessary for him to keep up in his studies, a very difficult matter, for while he was not dumber than an ox he was not any smarter. Most of his professors were lenient and helped him along. None gave him more hints, in answering questions, or asked him simpler ones than the economics professor, a thin, timid man named Bassum. One day when we were on the subject of transportation and distribution, it came Bolenciecwcwz's turn to answer a question. "Name one means of transportation," the professor said to him. No light came into the big tackle's eyes. "Just any means of transportation," said the professor. Bolenciecwcwz sat staring at him. "That is," pursued the professor, "any medium, agency, or method of going from one place to another." Bolenciecwcwz had the look of a man who is being led into a trap. "You may choose among steam, horse-drawn, or electrically propelled vehicles," said the instructor. "I might suggest the one which we commonly take in making long journeys across land." There was a profound silence in which everybody stirred uneasily, including Bolenciecwcwz and Mr. Bassum. Mr. Bassum abruptly broke this silence in an amazing manner. "Choo-choo-choo," he said, in a low voice, and turned instantly scarlet. He glanced appealingly around the room. All of us, of course, shared Mr. Bassum's desire that Bolenciecwcwz should stay abreast of the class in economics, for the Illinois game, one of the hardest and most important of the season, was only a week off. "Toot, toot, too-tooooooot!" some student with a deep voice moaned, and we all looked encouragingly at Bolenciecwcwz. Somebody else gave a fine imitation of a locomotive letting off steam. Mr. Bassum himself rounded off the little show. "Ding, dong, ding, dong," he said hopefully. Bolenciecwcwz was staring at the floor now, trying to think, his great brow furrowed, his huge hands rubbing together, his face red.

"How did you come to college this year, Mr. Bolenciecwcwz?" asked the professor. "*Chuffa chuffa, chuffa chuffa.*"

"M'father sent me," said the football player.

"What on?" asked Bassum.



"I git an 'lowance," said the tackle, in a low, husky voice, obviously embarrassed.

"No, no," said Bassum. "Name a means of transportation. What did you *ride* here on?"

"Train," said Bolenciewicz.

"Quite right," said the professor. "Now, Mr. Nugent, will you tell us——"

If I went through anguish in botany and economics—for different reasons—gymnasium work was even worse. I don't even like to think about it. They wouldn't let you play games or join in the exercises with your glasses on and I couldn't see with mine off. I bumped into professors, horizontal bars, agricultural students, and swinging iron rings. Not being able to see, I could take it but I couldn't dish it out. Also, in order to pass gymnasium (and you had to pass it to graduate) you had to learn to swim if you didn't know how. I didn't like the swimming pool, I didn't like swimming, and I didn't like the swimming instructor, and after all these years I still don't. I never swam but I passed my gym work anyway, by having another student give my gymnasium number (978) and swim across the pool in my place. He was a quiet, amiable blonde youth, number 473, and he would have seen through a microscope for me if we could have got away with it, but we couldn't get away with it. Another thing I didn't like about gymnasium work was that they made you strip the day you registered. It is impossible for me to be happy when I am stripped and being asked a lot of questions. Still, I did better than a lanky agricultural student who was cross-examined just before I was. They asked each student what college he was in—that is, whether Arts, Engineering, Commerce, or Agriculture. "What college are you in?" the instructor snapped at the youth in front of me? "Ohio State University," he said promptly.

It wasn't that agricultural student but it was another a whole lot like him who decided to take up journalism, possibly on the ground that when farming went to hell he could fall back on newspaper work. He didn't realize, of course, that that would be very much like falling back full-length on a kit of carpenter's tools. Haskins didn't seem cut out for journalism, being too embarrassed to talk to anybody and unable to use a typewriter, but the editor of the college paper assigned him to the cow barns, the sheep house, the horse pavilion, and the animal husbandry department generally. This was a genuinely big "beat," for it took up five times as much ground and got ten times as great a legislative appropriation as the College of Liberal Arts. The agricultural student knew animals, but nevertheless his stories were dull and colorlessly written. He took all afternoon on each of them, because he had

to hunt for each letter on the typewriter. Once in a while he had to ask somebody to help him hunt. "C" and "L," in particular, were hard letters for him to find. His editor finally got pretty much annoyed at the farmer-journalist because his pieces were so uninteresting. "See here, Haskins," he snapped at him one day, "why is it we never have anything hot from you on the horse pavilion? Here we have two hundred head of horses on this campus—more than any other university in the Western Conference except Purdue—and yet you never get any real low-down on them. Now shoot over to the horse barns and dig up something lively." Haskins shambled out and came back in about an hour; he said he had something. "Well, start it off snappily," said the editor. "Something people will read." Haskins set to work and in a couple of hours brought a sheet of typewritten paper to the desk; it was a two-hundred word story about some disease that had broken out among the horses. Its opening sentence was simple but arresting. It read: "Who has noticed the sores on the tops of the horses in the animal husbandry building?"

Ohio State was a land grant university and therefore two years of military drill was compulsory. We drilled with old Springfield rifles and studied the tactics of the Civil War even though the World War was going on at the time. At 11 o'clock each morning thousands of freshmen and sophomores used to deploy over the campus, moodily creeping up on the old chemistry building. It was good training for the kind of warfare that was waged at Shiloh but it had no connection with what was going on in Europe. Some people used to think there was German money behind it, but they didn't dare say so or they would have been thrown in jail as German spies. It was a period of muddy thought and marked, I believe, the decline of higher education in the Middle West.

As a soldier I was never any good at all. Most of the cadets were glumly indifferent soldiers, but I was no good at all. Once General Littlefield, who was commandant of the cadet corps, popped up in front of me during regimental drill and snapped, "You are the main trouble with this university!" I think he meant that my type was the main trouble with the university but he may have meant me individually. I was mediocre at drill, certainly—that is, until my senior year. By that time I had drilled longer than anybody else in the Western Conference, having failed at military at the end of each preceding year so that I had to do it all over again. I was the only senior still in uniform. The uniform which, when new, had made me look like an interurban railway conductor, now that it had become faded and too tight made me look like Bert Williams in his bell-boy act. This had a definitely bad

effect on my morale. Even so, I had become by sheer practise little short of wonderful at squad manoeuvres.

One day General Littlefield picked our company out of the whole regiment and tried to get it mixed up by putting it through one movement after another as fast as we could execute them: squads right, squads left, squads on right into line, squads right about, squads left front into line, etc. In about three minutes one hundred and nine men were marching in one direction and I was marching away from them at an angle of forty degrees, all alone. "Company, halt!" shouted General Littlefield, "that man is the only man who has it right!" I was made a corporal for my achievement.

The next day General Littlefield summoned me to his office. He was swatting flies when I went in. I was silent and he was silent too, for a long time. I don't think he remembered me or why he had sent for me, but he didn't want to admit it. He swatted some more flies, keeping his eyes on them narrowly before he let go with the swatter. "Button up your coat!" he snapped. Looking back on it now I can see that he meant me although he was looking at a fly, but I just stood there. Another fly came to rest on a paper in front of the general and began rubbing its hind legs together. The general lifted the swatter cautiously. I moved restlessly and the fly flew away. "You startled him!" barked General Littlefield, looking at me severely. I said I was sorry. "That won't help the situation!" snapped the General, with cold military logic. I didn't see what I could do except offer to chase some more flies toward his desk, but I didn't say anything. He stared out the window at the faraway figures of co-eds crossing the campus toward the library. Finally, he told me I could go. So I went. He either didn't know which cadet I was or else he forgot what he wanted to see me about. It may have been that he wished to apologize for having called me the main trouble with the university; or maybe he had decided to compliment me on my brilliant drilling of the day before and then at the last minute decided not to. I don't know. I don't think about it much any more.

## Books Including Short Biographies

THE FOLLOWING BIBLIOGRAPHY is not a complete list of collections of shorter biographies. It includes representative collections which illustrate the wide range of subject and purpose in the field and provide further biographical reading in many directions for those of different special interests. Books by writers included in this volume are not in the list, since such books have been mentioned in the head-notes. Some works not entirely biographical but including short biographical sketches are listed—somewhat arbitrarily, since the number of these might be indefinitely extended. The reader who wishes to pursue the subject beyond the scope of this list is referred to the more complete lists in E. H. O'Neill's *Biography by Americans, 1658-1936*; the *Essay and General Literature Index*; *Writings on American History*, an index of both books and periodicals; Hefling and Dyde's *Index to Contemporary Biography and Criticism*; and Logasa's *Biography in Collections*. Since so many shorter biographies appear in magazines and newspaper supplements, the reader should also consult *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, *International Index to Periodicals*, *Annual Magazine Subject Index*, and *New York Times Index*.

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# Books and Articles about Biography

THE FOLLOWING BIBLIOGRAPHY is a selection of representative books and articles, with the contents of each briefly indicated. Except for a few historical studies, the list is confined to discussions of the biography of the last quarter-century. No attempt has been made to include studies of individual biographers or reviews of single biographies.

- Adams, James Truslow, "Biography As an Art," *Saturday Review of Literature*, November 12, 1927: A distinguished American biographer and historian asserts that many modern biographers have not even asked themselves the fundamental question: "What is a man?"—"New Modes in Biography," *Current History*, November 1929: A satirical commentary on the excesses of the new biography, with special reference to "psycho-analytic nonsense," "the superiority-complex school," and "the cult of obscenity." These essays are also in *The Tempo of Modern Life*, N. Y., Boni, 1931.
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- Collins, Joseph, *The Doctor Looks at Biography*, N. Y., Doran, 1925: Except for some introductory definitions of types, this is a collection of reviews of modern biographies and autobiographies, with the books classified according to the occupations of their subjects.
- Colton, Arthur, "Modern Biography," *Saturday Review of Literature*, January 18, 1930: Ostensibly a review of Maurois' *Aspects of Biography*, this article is both a dissenting opinion on Maurois' methods and a neat summary of the differences between the old and the new biography.
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